

Shepherd University

Report of the Review Team
on the 2014 Compact Submission

April 2015



West Virginia
Higher Education
Policy Commission

HIGHLIGHTS

- The review team commends Shepherd's efforts to boost enrollment by offering support services to transfer students and adult learners. The institution plans to develop a transfer student website, identify specific representatives from the Admissions and Registrar's offices to work directly with transfer-specific advisors, and establish a clear catalog of course equivalencies for each of the institution's existing articulation agreements to maximize credit transfer opportunities.
- Shepherd's retention rate for full-time, first-time freshmen climbed from 67.6 percent for its 2011 cohort to 74.3 percent for the 2012 cohort. The review team appreciates the institution's retention efforts, and looks forward to seeing the results of the new initiatives it proposes in its First Year Retention strategy, including a renewed focus on strengthening its academic advising program with the implementation of Beacon advising software, and professional development on topics related to quality advising for academic advisors and advisement staff.
- The team recognizes as a best practice Shepherd's efforts to conduct systematic reviews of course syllabi for rigor and connectedness to course outcomes.
- Shepherd University demonstrates its continued commitment to faculty scholarship through its plan to review and revise its promotion and tenure policies, encourage faculty to utilize professional development funding, and increase the number of faculty who apply for and maintain graduate faculty status through a formal application process coordinated by the Division of Graduate Studies.
- As an integral part of its Degrees Awarded strategy, Shepherd is in the process of implementing DegreeWorks, a software tool designed to help advisors guide students along the most efficient path to completion while providing students with valuable information related to course selection and academic progress.
- Shepherd's Critical Regional Issues Comprehensive Plan outlines a set of bold initiatives designed to bring together a diverse set of stakeholders in a collaborative effort to identify critical industries and markets that need workforce support now and in the future, while working closely with P-12 to develop coherent programs that address these needs. Among its many initiatives, the institution plans to expand and formalize its use of advisory boards, use region-specific data to guide strategic policy, and work to improve regional healthcare by increasing the number of baccalaureate- and doctorally-prepared nurses.
- An effective financial aid literacy program equips students with the knowledge necessary to make sound financial decisions while in college and can lead to lower rates of indebtedness and student loan default. The team commends Shepherd University for its efforts to integrate financial aid literacy into its First-Year Experience Program, as well as several program-specific freshmen seminar courses.

- Shepherd is commended for involving a diverse group of stakeholders, including faculty, staff, administrators, community members, and elected officials, in the development of its Collaborative Access comprehensive plan. The plan focuses on enhancing awareness of pathways to higher education among the local P-12 population, increasing community and regional awareness of the programs and services offered to adult learners, and developing a seamless transition process for transfer and international students. The review team was most intrigued by Shepherd's "College in Six" program, an initiative designed to expose local sixth-grade students to the college experience through a series of events hosted on campus, and hopes that the institution's plans to expand this program are successful.
- The institution's Graduate Student Success strategy centers on building enrollment through the development of accelerated degree pathways, the addition of certificate programs in business and education, and increasing its international recruitment efforts. The team is confident that accelerated pathways will encourage greater numbers of students to pursue graduate degrees, and looks forward to following Shepherd's successes in this area.

SUMMARY OF 2018 INSTITUTIONAL TARGETS

The following table provides a summary of institutional targets and system goals on the key metrics outlined in the Commission's 2013-18 Master Plan. In some cases, institutions established 2018 targets lower than their actual 2013-14 values, their five-year averages, or the minimum contributions needed from each institution in order for the system to achieve its 2018 system-wide goal. Those occurrences are highlighted in orange. The review team asks all institutions to review the metrics submitted with their compact proposals, with particular attention focused on 2018 targets to ensure that they have set realistic targets that also contribute to the overall mission of reaching institution- and state-level goals. The Commission's Policy and Planning Division will be initiating a review process prior to the November 1st, 2015 deadline to revise institutional targets.

		System		Shepherd University		
		2013	System Goal	2013-14	Five Year Average	2018 Target
ACCESS						
	Fall Head Count	66,178	73,500	4,256	4,368	4,696
	Annualized FTE	61,716	68,000	3,685	3,792	3,847
	Fall First-Time Freshmen Headcount	11,188	12,750	684	761	798
	Fall Low-Income Student Headcount	19,866	22,000	1,331	1,319	1,503
	Fall Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Group Total	6,844	6,700	481	433	487
	Fall Adult (25+) Headcount	8,938	11,500	1,030	1,134	1,188
SUCCESS						
	Students Passing Developmental Courses					
	Math	69.3%	70%	**	**	**
	English	75.0%	75%	**	**	**
	Developmental Students Passing College-Level Course					
	Math	31.6%	60%	**	**	**
	English	56.3%	70%	**	**	**
	Retention					
	Full-Time, First-Time Freshmen	74.7%	80%	74.3%	**	74.0%
	Part-time, First-Time Freshmen	48.0%	50%	22.2%	**	65.6%
	Low-Income First-Time Freshmen	66.6%	75%	66.4%	**	70.0%
	Returning Adults	54.6%	65%	59.3%	**	72.0%
	Transfer Students	73.4%	76%	71.4%	**	74.0%
	Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Group Total	64.6%	75%	64.5%	**	67.0%
	Progress Toward Degree					
	First-Time Freshmen Earning 30 Hours	47.8%	65%	40.2%	**	44.0%
	Four-Year Graduation Rate Cohort Years:	2009	2014	2009	2014	
	First-Time Freshmen	23.4%	30%	23.9%	**	21.0%
	Low-Income First-Time Freshmen	17.0%	20%	18.7%	**	18.0%
	Returning Adults	39.1%	48%	34.2%	**	43.0%
	Transfer Students	43.2%	48%	47.6%	**	50.0%
	Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Group Total	13.0%	20%	9.8%	**	24.0%
	Six-Year Graduation Rate Cohort Years:	2007	2012	2007	2012	
	First-Time Freshmen	46.0%	60%	42.6%	**	45.0%
	Low-Income First-Time Freshmen	34.6%	40%	34.9%	**	40.0%
	Returning Adults	42.4%	58%	55.6%	**	65.0%
	Transfer Students	53.0%	58%	55.4%	**	55.8%
	Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Group Total	29.6%	40%	26.5%	**	33.0%
IMPACT						
	Degrees Awarded	13,295	15,500	832	752	779
	STEM Degrees	3,108	3,750	140	114	124
	STEM Education Degrees	121	**	2	6	10
	Health Degrees	1,850	2,000	71	60	59

CONCERNS

- The review team is concerned that Shepherd set its 2018 four- and six-year graduation rate targets lower than the rates it achieved in 2012 for first-time freshmen and low-income first-time freshmen, while setting higher targets for returning adults, transfer students, and underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. The team appreciates Shepherd's emphasis on improving graduation rates among target populations, but encourages the institution to consider revising its target rates for the general population and low-income subgroup of first-time freshmen.

REQUESTS

- None

RECOMMENDATION OF THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team recommends **approval of the Shepherd University Compact submission.**