

Assurance Argument

Naropa University

Review date: 4/14/2025

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1A-1

Naropa University has a rich history of staying rooted in its [foundational principles](#) of courage, compassion, wisdom and innovation whilst also evolving its mission to address contemporary needs. Significant updates were made to Naropa's mission in [an iterative process](#) that occurred in 2020 and 2021. The mission statement was revised to focus on overarching values such as student-centeredness, contemplative education and administration, diversity and inclusion, eco-sustainability, and Naropa's relevance and contribution to the broader world.

Led by the Office for Inclusive Community and the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education, key staff and faculty revised [the Mission Statement, and created statements of purpose, vision, and university values](#). Multiple [surveys](#) were sent to faculty to ensure comprehensive input. The Board of Trustees (BOT) reviewed their work, [provided feedback, and affirmed the refreshed mission and related statements](#).

The mission now reads: *We commit to create a more just and regenerative world by nurturing student insight and awareness, courage, and compassion. Through contemplative pedagogy, critical thinking, and active engagement, we offer students the skills they need to authentically engage as effective, mindful leaders.* [MVVP](#)

The updated purpose, mission, vision, and values statement, now known as the Community Compass, was introduced to the broader community in Fall 2021 and a [Community Compass Stewardship Group](#) formed to strategize the implementation of Naropa's Mission, Vision, Values and Purpose across community membership. One example of this group's work involved [enlisting feedback](#) from the larger university community through open forums.

In order to ensure the mission would pervade every aspect of university curriculum and operations, the division of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community was created. [2024 MCIC Brochure](#), [MCIC Mission Report_6.1.2022](#), [MCIC Sharepoint Page](#). MCIC brought together what were structurally separate, but functionally similar mission centers: The Office for Inclusive Community, which housed the university's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity initiatives, the university's restorative justice initiatives, and the Office of Sustainability; as well as The Joanna Macy Center, and The Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE). Bringing the center into one division and under the leadership of [a newly established Vice Presidency](#) allowed for more holistic interdepartmental collaboration and community-coalition building. Each [primary node of MCIC](#) works to cultivate radical consciousness and to deepen the integration of the mission, vision, and values. [2021-Naropa-Magazine-HLC\[1\]FINALNaropaMagazine_HLC\[1\]](#).

Engagement continues to occur around the mission, including [working groups and meetings](#) with the intention of creating action plans based on the Mission, such as the Mission Summit held in the fall of 2024 [with staff, faculty and students](#).

Naropa is closely following the fast-moving policy pronouncements by the US Department of Education, both those which may be enforceable and those which may require congressional or judicial action. As the enforceable policies become clearer, we will take such actions as needed to remain in compliance and remain as a participating Title IV institution. Naropa will take all possible steps to ensure any modifications keep us closely aligned with our Mission, Vision and Values.

1A-2

Naropa's mission states a clear commitment to contemplative pedagogy as its core methodology of educating students to become courageous, mindful leaders who take compassionate action.

The mission is reflected in the institution's academic offerings which are elaborated upon in 1A-4. Naropa University's syllabus policy requires all instructors to include an inclusivity statement, gender pronoun guidelines, Title IX information, accommodation details for various needs (including religious observances), accessibility resources, and a discussion on creating an inclusive and respectful classroom environment. Our policy reflects our commitment to creating a welcoming environment that embodies Naropa's core value of building a culture of belonging. This policy serves as a tangible expression of our dedication that all students, regardless of their background or needs, feel valued and supported in their educational journey [AA Syllabus Policies 121123](#).

Each academic program articulates its values, goals, and [program learning outcomes](#) in concert with the university's overall mission [Spring-2025-Semester-CNSC-829-C-Group-Process-VI](#) . Naropa's undergraduate core curriculum includes [six core areas](#) which directly tie to the university mission: Contemplative Inquiry & Practice , Social Justice & Antiracism, Sustainability & Ecological Regeneration , Artistic Expression & Creative Practice, Leadership & Service, and Research & Communication.

The core of university instruction is contemplative pedagogy. It is described on the Naropa College ([undergraduate education](#)) [website](#) as an invitation "to be courageous—to explore what it means to be truly human—to renew and deepen [one's] connection with the natural world and society; to provoke and sharpen [one's] intellect; to develop [one's] sense perceptions; and to nurture[one's] inherent wisdom and compassion. By engaging scholarship with an unbiased openness to [one's] present experience, [one] may become fearless enough to uplift the world without aggression and allow the gift of [one's] precious human life to have beneficial impact on others."

[Contemplative Education](#) seeks to reinvigorate the modalities by which students can access, engage, and internalize their learning. Through combining the strength of the Western intellectual tradition with contemplative techniques that access the emotive, embodied, and creative capacities natural to human beings, the experience of education can become a transformative experience for the whole person. [Contemplative practices](#) such as meditation, somatic work, and earth-based techniques inspire genuine confidence in both what and how we can learn about ourselves and the world around us. Increasing the diversity of ways in which learning can happen, centered in a basic acceptance that such learning is valid, offers perspective in fullness and near endless self-discovery.

Each academic department emphasizes contemplative methodologies from various academic disciplines and wisdom traditions. ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#)), and [courses across the curriculum](#) integrate contemplative practices. Each student has access to both classroom and individual meditation instruction. [CACE Frequently Asked Question, CACE Contemplative Resource Hub-Home](#). Naropa is notable for the presence of a meditation hall on every campus.

Naropa's mission emphasizes engaging with the world and contributing to social wellbeing. Naropa undergraduates experience [opportunities for community engagement](#) inside and outside the classroom. These include service-learning opportunities, internships, volunteer placements, and independent and collaborative research projects where students gain exposure to expert practitioners from academic disciplines. Graduate students pursue professional training as counselors, artists, chaplains, environmental leaders, therapists, scholars, and writers and engage in appropriate internships and service-learning opportunities [CPE Chaplain Sites](#), [Psychology Related Practicums and Internships](#),

The [scholarly work and research](#) of Naropa University faculty, which includes [Compassion, Many Means](#) (Quaglia, 2022), [Caring for You, Me, Us](#) (Quaglia & Cigrand, 2021), [Compassion and Skillful Means: Introduction](#) (Quaglia & Simmer-Brown, 2023), and [Spiritual Intelligence Matrix](#) (Preprint, 2025), exemplifies the university's commitment to contemplative education, social justice, and ecological awareness, demonstrating its dedication to a transformative mission

through impactful scholarship. In addition, Naropa's values to "Invoke artistic expression of the full human experience through creative awareness," and is exemplified [through various programs and initiatives](#). The university also engages in a wide variety of [mission-driven clinical service](#) and public services which are detailed in Criterion 1B.

1A-3

Naropa University's mission and related statements identify the nature of our higher education offerings as centered around contemplative education. As identified in our [current strategic priorities](#) being a leader in contemplative education requires us to continually define and refine our understanding of contemplative education and its relevance to contemporary society.

Since spring 2023, [CACE staff and faculty have been exploring](#) how various disciplines at the University define and practice contemplative education. This project aims to [refine how we articulate contemplative teaching](#) and learning to better communicate Naropa's unique contribution, [deepen internal discourse](#), as well as providing a resource to the increasing number of institutions of higher education whose faculty are incorporating mindfulness techniques in their curricula, and ensure statements align with the mission and current practices.

Naropa University offers [nine bachelor's degree majors](#), [six graduate programs](#), and [one certificate program](#). The Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program offers five distinctive concentrations. In addition to the residential program offerings, Naropa also offers four online undergraduate programs, and five low-residency graduate programs. Most of the online and hybrid programs were added during and following the pandemic. Those new offerings expanded the definition of "constituent" and Naropa [surveys](#) online students to learn how to best support them.

The [range of disciplines](#) reflects Naropa's mission and its unique focus on contemplative education, including service to the broader world. Each academic program articulates its values, goals, and student learning outcomes in concert with the university's overall mission. [Program Learning Outcomes Wisdom Traditions](#)

Naropa lives out its vision to create an "interconnected global community" by offering [services](#) and programs that include [a global community](#). An example of this is Naropa's hosting the [International Visitor Leadership Program \(IVLP\) Higher Education Partnerships initiative](#). Naropa furthers a sense of an interconnected community through the "[humans of Naropa series](#)" and as evidenced by daily mindfulness practices such as the [Naropa Bow](#) which unite us as a community.

Naropa [Values](#) influence all facets of our operation, including our [Employee Development Review](#) process. For example, [our guidebook](#) emphasizes creating a contemplative workplace.

Another example of how Naropa mission and values influence our operations is manifest in our budgeting priorities as illustrated by the [Budget Planning Worksheet](#). Every department must link their department's mission to the university mission and reflect on the university's strategic priorities.

These [values](#) are intentionally infused within the University's culture through the activities and initiatives of the department of [Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community](#), which includes [JEDI training](#), [facilitating restorative and reparative processes](#), [Climate Action & Sustainability Practices](#), [Contemplative Practice and support for Contemplative Education](#).

Ultimately, the goal of the MCIC is to both uphold and guard the mission, vision, and values that are at the heart of Naropa University.

Additionally, the search process for the incoming University President explicitly, and [intentionally considers the importance of the Naropa values](#) within the search process in order to be certain that the incoming President is aligned with the Naropa ethos.

1A-4

Academic Offerings:

[Naropa's academic programs](#) reflect its stated mission through the [learning outcomes](#) and pedagogy of contemplative education. [This education](#) emphasizes the cultivation of mindfulness and compassionate and skillful engagement with the world. The institution offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs that reflect its commitment to these values. Programs such as the Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies, Master of Arts in Ecopsychology, and Master of Divinity are designed to prepare students for meaningful careers that align with the university's mission of transforming the world through compassionate action and contemplative practice.

MCIC offers faculty resources designed to further the mission as well. The CACE Contemplative Pedagogy course grounds faculty in how to integrate contemplative practice into any course, [Contemplative Teaching and Learning Course Reading List](#). The JEDI-100 course, JEDI integration workshops, and the JEDI resource hub further support our faculty in creating inclusive classrooms. [JEDI-100 Integration Workshop Staff Faculty](#), [JEDI Resource Hub](#).

Student Support Services:

Naropa University's Student Success area within the Division of Development, Enrollment, and Student Success is committed to providing comprehensive support services that empower students from initial inquiry through graduation and beyond. Naropa University provides a variety of student support services aimed at helping students achieve success both in and out of the classroom. Student Financial Services, Registration, Student Affairs, Academic Advising, and Career & Life Development all work together around a core student service mission that derives from the Naropa mission statement in helping students cultivate awareness, harness wisdom, and actively engage in the institutional and broader communities, and lead authentically in the various spaces and places that may find themselves as leaders and change agents. The areas within Student Success each have [individual mission statements](#) that align with Naropa's broader mission and vision.

[Our CARE \(Consultation, Assessment, Referral, and Education\) Team](#) serves students who have emergent difficulties during the school year. It is made up of cross-departmental members, who review referrals weekly and assign assistance as necessary. The CARE team utilizes the NaBITA (National Association of Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment) risk rubric to assess incoming student concerns based on behavioral risk and potential for threat of harm to self or others.

To serve its diverse community, including a growing number of online and low-residency students, Naropa University's Dean of Students Office (Student Success) [launched Bodhi, an AI-assisted, SMS-based chatbot](#) in February 2024 based on a research-based framework scaffolded on four primary risk areas: academics, engagement, finances, and wellness. This retention and persistence initiative aims to provide accessible answers to frequently asked questions and track common student concerns, leveraging the broad potential for adoption within the largely post-traditional learner community by employing proactive SMS-text message outreach on average about every 2 to 3 weeks.

Bodhi has demonstrated strong student engagement and proactive support capabilities since its launch. With an 84% student opt-in rate for text messaging and a 74% active engagement rate, Bodhi has facilitated over 7,711 text message exchanges. Notably, Bodhi has identified student risk levels across academic, engagement, financial, and wellness domains, with 81% of engaged students classified as "low" risk. This allows for real-time intervention, and while cross-referencing with CARE team referrals revealed limited overlap for "high" risk students, the chatbot successfully identified students needing additional support. Student Success is now implementing targeted outreach for "medium" and "high" risk individuals. Bodhi's utility is further highlighted by the most common student inquiries, focusing on academics, student services, financial aid, and general university information, with frequent questions about events, academic assistance, calendars, and stress management resources.

[The Naropa Advising Team](#) (Undergraduate and Graduate) aims to foster students' academic growth through personalized support and authentic relationships. They view learning as a process of discovery, encouraging students' natural curiosity and helping them navigate their academic journey. With a commitment to nurturing students' aspirations, the team provides guidance tailored to individual needs, creating a supportive environment for academic flourishing at Naropa.

Naropa University Career & Life Development empowers students and alumni to achieve fulfilling careers aligned with higher consciousness, relevant to a changing world, through inspiring learning experiences. They ignite transformational experiences that drive personal and professional growth, enabling individuals to thrive. Offering free, unlimited career advising, they provide support with career exploration, job search and interview skills, and practicum/internship searches. Students can schedule appointments for personalized guidance, including one-on-one resume and cover letter assistance. A comprehensive resource library provides additional tips and templates. The office also extends limited advising to those on leave of absence, and aims to offer weekly, or bi-weekly appointments to current students and alumnx. [Faculty can also request that Career Services visit their classroom.](#)

The Office of Well-Being & Resilience is a [new office created in July 2024](#) that provides campus-wide resourcing for students well-being across a wide variety of experiences and environmental, physical, social & relational, emotional, spiritual, academic & intellectual, financial, and occupational health. This area, while still new, will provide trainings and educational opportunities for students, faculty, and staff based on utilization and engagement [data collected from our previous Naropa Counseling & Wellness area](#). On our Arapahoe Campus, W&R maintains a wellness area equipped with a variety of books, cards, and other wellness items and offers weekly drop-in AcuDetox sessions (a form of auricular acupuncture developed in 1974 which helps dealing with trauma and stress) on both physical campuses free to all members of the institutional community. This area also oversees Naropa's telehealth provider, [TimelyCare](#), which provides 9 free telehealth sessions and 24/7/365 triage care to all students, regardless of location.

[The Office of Accessibility Resources \(OAR\)](#) is committed to creating an inclusive educational environment by reducing barriers and enhancing student access. They provide comprehensive support and advocate for students with documented disabilities, including learning, physical, medical, and psychological conditions. OAR encourages students to explore potential accommodations and facilitates an interactive process involving students, faculty, and staff. Additionally, OAR offers faculty resources, training, and consultation to ensure accessible education for all.

[The Naropa Writing Center \(NWC\)](#), established in 2000, provides free, peer-led writing support to the entire Naropa community, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Emphasizing collaboration and empathy, the NWC offers one-on-one consultations for all stages of the writing process, fostering confidence and skill development. Services include in-person and online sessions (including asynchronous options), extended sessions, workshops, and resource handouts. The NWC focuses on peer support, active listening, and empowering writers, rather than editing. They offer various appointment types—online, in-person, and asynchronous e-tutoring—to accommodate diverse needs and schedules. Writers can bring any project, from academic papers to creative writing and professional documents, for constructive feedback and guidance.

In addition, the university supports student groups such as Students of Color and Allies, a BIPOC co-working space, The Queer Coalition, Student Veterans Association, and Neshama Hevera. [Student Affinity Groups](#).

Enrollment Profile

Naropa University's enrollment profile ([2022](#), [2023](#), [2024](#)) is working towards being consistent with its mission. Because Naropa programs emphasize personal, social, and academic development, prospective students are encouraged to explore mission fit, personal readiness, academic preparation, and writing skills, along with the desire to study in a contemplative setting.

Student surveys (student [graduate](#) and [undergraduate](#) satisfaction surveys, the fall [2022](#), [2023](#), and [2024](#) incoming student inventory) reflect that our alternative approach to education has

drawn students from many spiritual orientations and interests. The university's current [graduate](#) enrollment and [undergraduate](#) enrollment profiles demonstrate that the university enrolls students from a broad range of backgrounds, varying in level of study, major, degree sought, age, ethnicity, and origin.

1A-5

Naropa University ensures that its mission is not just a statement but a guiding force that actively shapes every aspect of the institution. The university articulates its mission through publicly available information, strategic planning, community engagement, and academic programming, making it clear to all stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader public—how the mission informs institutional priorities and decision-making.

Naropa's mission is highly visible and consistently communicated across multiple platforms, ensuring that it is well understood by all members of the community:

- The Naropa University Mission Statement and Core Values are published on the university website, in the [course catalog](#), [Student Handbook](#), [Staff Handbook](#), [Faculty Handbook](#), and [Trustee Manual](#). These documents explicitly define Naropa's identity and educational philosophy.
- Naropa's [public podcast series](#), now with more than 105 episodes, serves as an ongoing platform to discuss and promote contemplative education, reinforcing its mission to both internal and external audiences.
- **Digital and physical materials**, including [posters](#) across campus, serve as constant reminders of Naropa's mission and values, ensuring they are embedded in everyday institutional life.

Naropa's mission is not merely aspirational—it actively drives institutional strategy and decision-making. In turn, our strategy and decision-making further articulates and enlivens our mission. The mission informs [Naropa's Big 5 Strategic Priorities](#), which serve as the university's long-term plan for growth, sustainability, and impact:

- **Strategic Priorities Developed by Leadership:** The Big 5 Strategic Priorities were developed collaboratively by the Executive Leadership Council (ELC) and approved by the Board of Trustees, ensuring alignment with Naropa's mission and values.
- **Long-Term Vision to 2030:** University leadership [mapped out institutional goals extending through 2030](#), showing a sustained commitment to Naropa's mission and core values. This ensures continuity, strategic growth, and ongoing mission alignment.
- **Board of Trustees' Reflection on Mission and Strategy:** The Board of Trustees regularly engages [in structured reflection on Naropa's mission](#), ensuring that strategic planning aligns with core values and institutional priorities. During recent meetings, [the Board has examined long-term financial stability, faculty and staff well-being, social transformation, and the evolving definition of contemplative education in the 21st century](#). These discussions provide ongoing guidance to maintain Naropa's institutional integrity, adaptability, and commitment to social change.

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Naropa University's recruitment strategies, curriculum, and pedagogical approach are built entirely around its mission, ensuring students experience contemplative education in practice:

- **Admissions and Recruitment Aligned with Mission:** Naropa actively seeks students who are drawn to its [unique mission](#), emphasizing self-awareness, compassion, and social responsibility in [admissions materials](#) and [recruitment efforts](#).
- **Faculty and Staff Recruitment Aligned with Mission:** Naropa ensures that [faculty](#) and [staff](#) job descriptions reflect our commitment to contemplative education and social responsibility, encouraging applicants who are aligned to apply.

Naropa University ensures that its mission is clearly articulated and transparently communicated through multiple channels:

- **University leadership provides regular updates on strategic priorities**, ensuring that stakeholders understand how mission-driven decisions are made, both in [live hybrid Town Halls](#) and [planned communication](#).
- Institutional Surveys, such as the [Student Satisfaction Survey, the Naropa Incoming Student Inventory, and the Campus Climate Survey](#), confirm that the student experience is integrated and aligned with Naropa's purpose, vision, and mission.

Naropa University does not just state its mission—it actively integrates it into every aspect of institutional life. From strategic planning and governance to academic programs and public engagement, Naropa ensures that its mission is a living, evolving force that guides the institution's priorities, values, and long-term vision.

Through highly visible public communication, structured strategic planning, and deeply integrated academic and operational efforts, Naropa's mission is unmistakable and impossible to separate from the university's identity. Every student, faculty member, and community partner interacts with and experiences the mission in action, making it clear that Naropa's purpose is not just words on a page but a commitment actively pursued every day.

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1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1B-1

Naropa University, a private not-for-profit institution, is deeply committed to serving the public good through transformative, contemplative education that extends beyond the university itself. Since its founding in 1974, Naropa has fostered meaningful community engagement through its academic programs, outreach initiatives, and institutional values. That includes treating seriously its pioneering work with contemplative pedagogy and supporting other schools internationally as the mindfulness in education movement has continued to grow exponentially.

Mission and Values

Naropa University's [mission](#) explicitly supports both students and local and global communities. The university's [statement of purpose articulates its commitment](#):

We exist to cultivate compassionate, creative, and critical engagement with an ever-changing world through the discipline of contemplative education.

Additionally, the university upholds this value:

Champion active responsibility and courageous, effective, and inspired engagement with the world.

Evidence of Public Engagement

Community-Based Learning and Student Engagement

Findings from the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) indicate that nearly all Naropa seniors reported participation in community-based (service-learning) projects, significantly exceeding national comparison groups. Students also engage in extensive volunteer projects, [internships](#), and [service-learning opportunities](#).

Spiritual and Psychological Health and Wellness

Chaplaincy Program

Naropa's [Chaplaincy Program](#) offers **Association for Clinical Pastoral Education accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)** internships, providing students with hands-on experience in hospitals, hospices, nonprofits, and innovative contexts such as eco-chaplaincy. This model integrates contemplative practice, trauma-informed care, earth-based spirituality, and interreligious approaches to supporting individuals in crisis.

Career & Life Development

Naropa's Office of Career & Life Development maintains an extensive network of [internship and clinical placement partnerships](#) nationwide, ensuring that students gain professional experience while contributing to their local communities.

Community Mental Health Initiatives

Naropa Community Art Studio (NCAS)

Since its founding in 2001, [NCAS has hosted over 1,280 weekly sessions](#) for marginalized populations, providing a therapeutic and inclusive space. In collaboration with **Boulder Community Health's Pathways Program**, [NCAS offers wellness-focused art experiences](#) for outpatient care programs.

Naropa Community Counseling Center (NCCC)

Established in 2015, [NCCC](#) provides **low-cost counseling services** to diverse populations in Boulder, serving over 575 clients in 2023 alone. Over **half of NCC clients are Medicaid recipients**, ensuring access to affordable mental health care. The center also partners with local Latinx organizations to provide culturally responsive mental health programming and works with the **City of Boulder Municipal Court** to support individuals facing homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health challenges.

Educational Offerings for the Public

Naropa faculty and leadership frequently engage in national and international discussions on contemplative education, presenting at conferences and offering public talks.

Naropa is dedicated to public education

- **Community Conversations on Race** (in partnership with CU Boulder, Kaiser Permanente, Boulder County, and the City of Boulder) participated [structured dialogues](#) to address racial equity and strengthen community relationships
- **Mindful U Podcast** [provides](#) over **105 free episodes** on mindfulness, social justice, and contemplative education.
- **Electric Black Earth** actively [supported](#) scholars from underrepresented backgrounds.

- **Café Contemplative**, a [free public event](#), offers an inclusive space for mindfulness, dialogue, and reflection, welcoming individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage in deep discussions on contemplative practice and social issues.

Extended Campus and CACE Offerings

The **Extended Campus (EC)** [division](#), launched in 2021, delivers Naropa-inspired education to national and global audiences through online, hybrid, and in-person [programs on mindfulness, compassion](#), social justice, and wellness. During the pandemic, EC provided resources for resilience and community building.

The **Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE)** [\(CACE\)](#) extends Naropa's impact beyond campus through:

- [Mindful Compassion Training](#), serving hundreds since 2017.
- Training programs for **K-12 and higher education teachers** in contemplative pedagogy.
- Research funded by major institutions such as the **John Templeton Foundation** and **Mind and Life Institute**, including a 2020 Think Tank on Compassion that led to a [special issue in the peer-reviewed journal Mindfulness](#).

CACE also sponsors community events such as Naropa's [Community Practice Day](#), featuring keynote speakers including:

- Jeanine Canty (California Institute for Integral Studies)
- Michelle Chatman (University of the District of Columbia)
- Kazu Haga (East Point Peace Academy)
- Eduardo Duran (Apache/Tewa/Lakota psychologist)
- Jaguar Womban (multidimensional healing artist)

The Joanna Macy Center for Resilience and Regeneration (JMCR)

JMCR supports **climate action and resilience education**, promoting **The Work That Reconnects** methodology. The [Nuclear Guardianship Initiative](#) raises awareness about radioactive materials and non-proliferation advocacy.

Naropa also serves as the **host institution for the** [HIVE](#) **Climate Justice Network**, which convenes activists, educators, and community leaders working on climate justice initiatives at the local and national levels.

Sustainability and Environmental Impact

Naropa actively reduces its environmental footprint and collaborates with community partners such as Eco-Cycle and Boulder County to achieve zero waste goals. The university organizes annual sustainability events, including:

- [Earth Justice Day](#)
- [Community Resilience Day](#)
- [Bike Shack](#)

The **Environmental Studies Department** engages students and the community in sustainable land stewardship through:

1. [Eco-landscaping](#) and a faculty-student-managed food forest.
2. **Partnerships with local climate justice organizations** like [The Hive](#), promoting cross-sector collaboration on regional climate initiatives.

Conclusion

Naropa University exemplifies an institution committed to public service, environmental sustainability, and social justice through its academic programs, outreach initiatives, and mission-driven partnerships. Through extensive community engagement, public education, and service-learning opportunities, Naropa ensures that its educational role benefits not only its students but also the broader public.

1B-2

Naropa University is a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt institution that prioritizes its educational mission over financial gain. The university has no investors, parent organizations, or external financial interests that benefit from its revenue. Additionally, Naropa does not make financial contributions to any external entities other than for such purposes as co-sponsoring academically relevant events with other universities. The Board of Trustees members serve without compensation, and the university enforces a strict [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) to ensure that all financial decisions align with its academic mission and strategic goals.

Stewardship of Financial Resources

Naropa University is committed to responsible fiscal management, using tuition, fees, investment returns, and philanthropic contributions to directly support its educational mission. Naropa's budget planning process is mission-aligned and ensures financial resources are allocated in ways that support the university's strategic plan. The [WIS 2025-2026 Budget Planning Worksheet](#) clearly integrates the university's [Big 5 Strategic Priorities](#), ensuring that budgetary decisions support academic excellence, faculty development, sustainability, and student experience.

Mission-Driven Budget Planning

All **academic and administrative departments** actively participate in mission-aligned budget planning. The budget process follows a [Continuous Quality Improvement](#) model, where departments assess previous budget outcomes, align funding requests with [strategic priorities](#), and ensure financial sustainability while advancing Naropa's core educational objectives.

For more detailed information on the budgeting process and alignment with the university mission and strategic priorities see Criterion 5.B and 5.C.

Conclusion

Naropa University's financial model is structured to ensure that its educational mission remains the top priority. The university's mission-aligned budget planning process demonstrates a clear commitment to using financial resources responsibly to support students, faculty, and the broader academic community. By continuously refining budget processes, Naropa ensures that financial decisions are strategically aligned with its vision for contemplative education, social responsibility, and academic excellence.

1B-3

Naropa's commitment to creating a compassionate and just world extends into a variety of partnerships with external organizations and initiatives that address the needs of both local and broader communities.

Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC)

Naropa's Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC) division was established to invigorate and integrate the university's mission at all levels of the organization. It represents Naropa's commitment to justice, liberation, sustainability, contemplative practice, and compassionate action in public engagements. MCIC has collaborated with numerous visiting scholars, activists, and artists, as well as a variety of organizations with shared values and vision, including:

- **NAACP Sponsorship of 'Walk with Me'** – Naropa provided sponsorship for this community-building event in Boulder County.
- [Community Conversations on Race](#) – Naropa participated in public discussions in response to racial justice concern.
- **Thomas Hübl's Pocket Project** – In response to the Boulder **King Soopers Shooting**, Naropa partnered with the Pocket Project to support community healing through trauma integration work.
- [Ava Hamilton – Earth Justice and Indigenous Peoples Day](#) – Public programming led by Indigenous activist and filmmaker Ava Hamilton, organized by Seann. [Evidence Needed]
- [Sacred Activism Initiatives](#) – Ongoing collaborations with leaders in contemplative activism to support social and environmental justice movements. [Evidence Needed]

- [Civilian Police Oversight Committee](#) – Naropa’s engagement with the **City of Boulder Police Oversight Committee** included a selection process in which JM participated. Two students, one from CU and one from Naropa, were selected for the 2024-2025 term. The Oversight Committee arose from a [nationally covered incident](#) from 2019 with millions of views, where a Naropa Student was confronted by a Boulder Police Officer, for no justifiable reason. The officer was subsequently terminated and Naropa was asked by the City of Boulder to participate in the needed process of police reform.

Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE)

[CACE](#) has established strategic partnerships to bring Mindful Compassion Training to a wide range of external constituents, including:

- **Great Falls, Montana School District**
- **University of Colorado-Boulder Office of Advising**
- **City of Boulder**
- **Renee Crown Wellness Institute at the University of Colorado**
- **Contemplative Resource Center at CU-Boulder**

CACE was a founding member of the Rocky Mountain [Dialogues on Mindfulness in Higher Education](#), bringing together institutions from across Colorado’s Front Range to discuss integrating mindfulness into classrooms, student services, and faculty development.

[Naropa’s historic traditional Japanese Tea House](#) also serves as a site for collaborative partnerships with Rocky Mountain Chadō and other contemplative organizations.

Community-Based Education & Service

Naropa University extends its **contemplative education philosophy** to the broader community through its academic programs and community-oriented facilities:

- **Collaborations with Key Community Stakeholders** – Naropa works closely with the **University of Colorado Planning Office** and the **City of Boulder**, engaging in meetings with:
 - The [City Elections](#)
 - The [City Council](#)
 - The [Landmark Board](#)
 - [Boulder Peace Week](#)

These collaborations ensure Naropa’s integration into local planning, development, and public engagement efforts. The university has also participated in:

- [University Hill Reinvestment Committee](#)
- [CARE Summit](#)

- [International Town/Gown Association Conference](#)

Climate & Environmental Justice

Naropa University is deeply engaged in climate justice initiatives through partnerships and advocacy efforts:

- [Climate Justice Hive](#) – Naropa, in partnership with Boulder Dot Earth, co-founded the Climate Justice Hive, a collaborative initiative bringing together community-based climate justice organizations.
 - Naropa donates office space to the Hive, enabling climate activists to coordinate and amplify climate action efforts in Boulder County.
 - The [Hive](#) integrates contemplative and restorative practices into its mission and offers workshops, teach-ins, and events in collaboration with Naropa departments.
- **Nuclear Nexus – Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center Partnership**
 - Joanna Macy Center for Resilience and Regeneration supports the [Nuclear Guardianship](#) initiative, engaging in anti-nuclear proliferation efforts, supporting student activists, and hosting community discussions on nuclear issues.
 - Naropa received a philanthropic gift so it could serve as a named producer of the documentary [“The Vow from Hiroshima”](#), a film streamed on PBS for three years to raise awareness about the International Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
 - Naropa hosts the Atomic Film Series and engages in community actions regarding [Rocky Flats](#), a former plutonium pit cleanup site.

Indigenous Reciprocity

Naropa continues to expand its commitment to Indigenous voices and reciprocity, including:

- Nature-Based Counseling Program partnerships with [Towards Right Relationship](#) Boulder, offering community presentations on Indigenous perspectives.
- Ongoing [Indigenous-led environmental and land stewardship initiatives](#).

Conclusion

Naropa University’s engagement with external communities reflects its commitment to contemplative education, justice, sustainability, and social transformation. By fostering meaningful collaborations, Naropa actively responds to community needs, ensuring that its mission and capacity align with the greater good.

Sources

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- Community Conversations on Race (6-2-2020)
- Community Practice Day
- Crit 1B1 CACE webpage
- Crit 1B1 CACE_Compassion Training
- Crit 1B1 CACE_Tea House webpage
- Crit 1B1 CACE_Upcoming Program
- Crit 1B1 Community Art Studios webpage
- Crit 1B1 GRAD Internship Sites_Career and Life Dev
- Crit 1B1 Mindfulness Journal article
- Crit 1B1 Towards Right Relationship
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- Walk with Council
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1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C-1

Naropa University is deeply committed to fostering informed citizenship and workplace success through curricular and [co-curricular activities](#) that emphasize diversity, inclusion, and [social responsibility](#). This commitment is grounded in the institution's Mission and Vision Statements:

- **Mission Statement:** We commit to create a more just and regenerative world by nurturing student insight and awareness, courage, and compassion. Through contemplative pedagogy, critical thinking, and active engagement, we offer students the skills they need to authentically engage as effective, mindful leaders.
- **Vision Statement:** Naropa envisions an interconnected global community that embodies an everlasting commitment to personal actions, interpersonal relations, and vocations that promote individual, social, and ecological liberation and wellbeing.

Naropa prepares students for professional and civic life through the following initiatives:

Foundational Knowledge

To ensure students are well-equipped for [engaged citizenship](#) and career success, Naropa requires all students to complete courses focused on diversity, social justice, and ethical leadership. These courses cultivate critical perspectives on cultural and societal issues, enabling students to navigate and address complex challenges in professional and civic environments. [Social Justice and Diversity Courses](#). Additionally, undergraduate core requirements emphasize academic proficiency, social responsibility, environmental consciousness, and civic engagement, ensuring that every student graduates with a well-rounded foundation for workplace success. [Courses that Fulfill Core Requirements](#).

Curriculum Integration

Naropa's curriculum integrates diversity and multicultural perspectives across disciplines, fostering informed citizenship and preparing students for the realities of diverse workplaces.

- **Dedicated Diversity-Focused Courses:** Courses such as *COR-150 Diversity Seminar* and *COR-315 Social Justice & Antiracism* teach students to analyze social structures, systemic inequities, and cultural differences, equipping them with critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for civic engagement and leadership roles. **As stated in other areas of the Assurance Argument, Naropa is very aware and closely following the fast moving policy pronouncements by the US Department of Education, both those which may be enforceable and those which may require congressional or judicial action. As the enforceable policies become clearer we will take such actions as needed to modify syllabi, admissions criteria, student financial aid awards and hiring policies in order to remain in compliance and remain as a participating Title IV institution. Naropa will take all possible steps to ensure any modifications keep us closely aligned with our Mission, Vision and Values.**
- **Multicultural and Social Justice Elements Across Disciplines:** Programs embed diversity-related themes into a broad range of fields. Courses like *ART-200 The Contemplative Artist* encourage students to explore cultural influences in artistic expression, *PAX-250 Introduction to Peace & Conflict Studies* examines global peacebuilding strategies, and *ENV-355 Environmental Justice* connects sustainability with social advocacy.
- **Culturally Responsive Counseling and Psychology Training:** Courses such as *CMHC-601 Social & Multicultural Foundations* and *CNSC-820 Multicultural Counseling* prepare students for professional settings by emphasizing inclusive and equitable approaches to mental health and wellness.
- **Interdisciplinary Approaches to Equity and Justice:** Programs such as *INTD-210 Introduction to Gender & Women's Studies* and *REL-312 Spiritual Models of Social Action* provide students with interdisciplinary tools to engage in advocacy, leadership, and policymaking in a diverse society.

By embedding these elements throughout the curriculum, Naropa ensures that students develop the analytical, interpersonal, and leadership skills required for meaningful civic engagement and career success. [Social Justice and Diversity Courses.pdf](#)

Syllabus Guidelines

Faculty are required to integrate diversity-related learning objectives into syllabi, ensuring a consistent and intentional approach to fostering informed citizenship and workplace success. Departments regularly review these elements to maintain program integrity and relevance. [AA Syllabus Policies 121123](#).

Creative Exploration

Naropa encourages students to explore complex societal issues through [creative expression](#). Assignments—including [written reflections, theatrical productions, and musical compositions](#)—allow students to examine diverse cultural narratives, develop critical thinking, and enhance communication skills. These projects provide students with tangible, real-world skills in analysis, collaboration, and public engagement—key competencies for career and civic success.

Co-Curricular Enrichment

Naropa extends learning beyond the classroom through [dynamic co-curricular programs](#) that prepare students for leadership and professional success. Initiatives such as [social justice workshops](#), cultural exchange programs, and community service projects enable students to apply their academic learning in real-world settings. Additionally, guest speaker series featuring experts from diverse backgrounds expose students to global perspectives and emerging workplace trends. [SWP 2024 Catalog](#).

Training and Programming

The Division of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC) strengthens student preparation for professional and civic life through [targeted trainings](#) and leadership development programs. Offerings include diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) workshops and conflict resolution training. [Fall 2021 Restorative Trainings](#), [MCIC Restorative Trainings 22](#), [MCIC Spring 2022 Trainings](#).

Sustainability and Diversity

Naropa's approach to sustainability extends beyond environmental stewardship, incorporating social justice and economic equity into its curriculum and campus initiatives. This ensures students graduate with a comprehensive understanding of how ecological responsibility intersects with civic and professional life.

- **Core Sustainability Education:** Courses such as *COR-222 Sustainability Seminar* and *ENV-215 Sustainability* provide foundational knowledge on ecological resilience and sustainable development, preparing students for careers in environmental advocacy and policy.
- **Experiential Learning and Fieldwork:** Courses like *ENV-223 Field Ecology* and *ENV-236 Green Building* incorporate fieldwork and hands-on projects that prepare students for sustainability-focused careers in architecture, urban planning, and conservation.
- **Environmental Justice and Policy Training:** Offerings like *ENV-355 Environmental Justice* and *ENV-253 Solidarity Economies* equip students with the knowledge and skills to advocate for systemic change in environmental and economic policies.
- **Integrating Mindfulness and Ecology:** Courses such as *ENV-318 Deep Ecology* and *ENV-361 Spiritual Ecology* explore the intersection of mindfulness and environmental

sustainability, fostering holistic leadership approaches that integrate ethical and ecological considerations into professional practices.

Through this multi-faceted sustainability curriculum, Naropa ensures that graduates are prepared to lead in environmentally conscious careers and engage in civic initiatives that promote sustainability and social equity. [Environmental Ecology Courses](#)

Career Development

Naropa ensures that students are workplace-ready by offering career development courses and experiential learning opportunities across disciplines. These courses and programs help students develop leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills necessary for career success:

- **Career Preparation Courses:** Courses like *COL-220E Exploring Leadership* and *COL-240 Innovation Skills Workshop* provide training in leadership, collaboration, and strategic thinking, preparing students for dynamic professional roles.
- **Internships and Practicums:** Programs such as *COL-450 Internship* and *COL-451E Extended Internship* give students hands-on experience in industries aligned with their career goals, allowing them to build professional networks and apply classroom learning in real-world environments.
- **Industry-Specific Training:** Courses like *PAR-400 Building a Career in the Arts* teach students skills in self-promotion, grant writing, and project management, while *CMHC-620 Counseling Practicum* and *CNSA-871 Internship I: TCAT* provide direct experience in counseling and therapeutic services.

These offerings ensure that Naropa graduates are equipped with the practical experience, professional competencies, and leadership abilities necessary to thrive in diverse workplaces. [Career and Life Prep Courses.](#)

Internships and Job Placements

Naropa University is dedicated to ensuring students gain meaningful professional experience that prepares them for career success and engaged citizenship. Through [the Office of Career and Life Development](#), the institution offers a wide range of internship and job placement opportunities that align with its mission of fostering contemplative education, social justice, and sustainability.

Undergraduate and Graduate-Level Internships

Both undergraduate and graduate students at Naropa benefit from [hands-on experiences](#) through structured internships and practicums that integrate contemplative practice with professional development. The **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program** offers graduate students practical experience in spiritual care at diverse sites, including hospitals, hospices, correctional facilities, and community organizations. These internships provide essential training in

chaplaincy, counseling, and social service work, reinforcing Naropa's commitment to transformative education. [MDiv Handbook Chaplains, CPE Chaplain Sites.](#)

Graduate students pursuing counseling degrees are required to complete [clinical practicums and internships](#) that provide direct experience in therapeutic settings under licensed supervision. Courses such as CMHC-620 Counseling Practicum and CMHC-622 Internship I allow students to develop essential counseling skills, including case conceptualization, treatment planning, and social justice advocacy. These internships take place in community mental health centers, private practices, schools, and hospitals, ensuring diverse clinical exposure.

For those specializing in art therapy, somatic psychology, or contemplative psychotherapy, advanced field placements like CNSA-871 Internship I: Transpersonal Art Therapy and CNSB-871 Internship I: Body Psychotherapy provide immersive, hands-on experience.

Over the course of 700 required hours, students engage in direct client work, clinical supervision, and interdisciplinary collaboration, preparing them for careers in mental health counseling, trauma therapy, and holistic healing. The Office of Career and Life Services facilitates internship and practicum contracts with more than a hundred practice sites, ranging from large institutions like Colorado Children's Hospital to small or focused clinical practices such as Queer Asterisk, which supports queer, trans, and gender-expansive individuals; or Medicine Horse, which provides equine-facilitated psychotherapy. This range of options allows graduate students to have a diversity of experiences across the mental healthcare ecosystem ([Psychology Related Practicums and Internships](#)).

Career Services and Professional Development

Naropa's **Office of Career and Life Development** provides [comprehensive support](#) for students seeking internships and employment, including career counseling, networking opportunities, and job placement assistance. The university maintains strong relationships with industry partners, nonprofit organizations, and community service providers, ensuring that students have access to internships that align with their academic and professional aspirations.

By integrating real-world experiences into academic learning, Naropa ensures that students graduate with practical skills, professional connections, and a deep sense of purpose, ready to contribute meaningfully to their chosen fields.

Conclusion

Through its comprehensive integration of diversity, social justice, sustainability, and professional development, Naropa University equips students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for both workplace success and engaged citizenship. By embedding these values into academic and co-curricular programming, Naropa ensures that its graduates emerge as informed, responsible, and proactive members of their communities and professions.

Naropa University does not merely acknowledge diversity—it actively fosters a vibrant and inclusive environment where all members feel valued and respected. This commitment is deeply embedded in institutional processes, from recruitment and faculty development to student support services and curriculum design.

Building a Diverse Workforce

A cornerstone of Naropa's approach is its dedication to cultivating a diverse and culturally competent workforce. Job postings include inclusivity-related minimum qualifications to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, hiring processes emphasize essential qualifications while avoiding language that may deter historically marginalized candidates.

To ensure equity in hiring practices, Naropa has implemented several key initiatives:

- **Inclusive Hiring Practices Training:** In 2023, the university conducted a training program focused on creating inclusive job postings and interview best practices ([Training 2 Job Posting Quick Bite](#))
- **Candidate Interview Matrix:** Hiring managers receive structured interview matrices to ensure fair and consistent evaluation ([Interview Matrix](#))
- **Compliance with EEO Guidelines:** Clear guidelines on illegal interview questions and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance are distributed to prevent discriminatory hiring practices ([Illegal Interview Questions and EEO Guidelines](#))
- **Diverse Applicant Outreach:** Many job openings are posted on **Insight Into Diversity**, generating significant interest. They also all include a statement on diversity. [JD Adjunct Faculty](#), [JD Digital Marketing Coordinator](#), [JD Tech Support Specialist](#). From January 1, 2023, to February 14, 2024, these postings resulted in over **700 applicants** ([Insight Into Diversity - Naropa University Job Postings 112321424](#))

While these efforts demonstrate a proactive approach, Naropa is committed to assessing their impact. Future initiatives will include analyzing retention rates of diverse hires and continuing to gather feedback from employees on the [overall campus climate](#).

In addition, as a key initiative of our strategic priority #5: [Build an inspired people culture with JEDI at the center](#), our most recent [employee review process](#) asks employees and managers to approach work in a contemplative manner by striking a balance between performance and productivity; and connection and collaboration. Furthermore, the Staff Executive Council conducted [a staff satisfaction survey](#) and is working with managers to integrate its feedback.

Empowering Students Through Support Services

Recognizing that support extends beyond the classroom, Naropa has established two key divisions that address inclusivity and student success:

1. **The Division of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC):** This office organizes critical consciousness-raising activities such as workshops on microaggressions, social justice, and identity development as well as affinity spaces for students from underrepresented backgrounds. [Culture Center Schedule, Fall 2021](#), [Restorative Trainings, MCIC Restorative Trainings 22](#), [MCIC Spring 2022 Trainings](#),
2. **The Division of Development, Enrollment, and Student Success:** This area provides holistic student support, including mental health resources, [student accountability](#), well-being & resilience, and [accessibility services](#).

Naropa's restorative practices model further enhances student support. Programs such as Restorative Conversations, Connection Circles, and the Community Repair and Support Team (CReST) provide students with structured avenues for conflict resolution and community healing. [2022 Restorative Menu](#), [CReST Sign Up](#), [Fall 2024 Guidebook for Faculty - Staff Restorative Conversations](#)

Diversity Woven into the Curriculum

Naropa's commitment to inclusivity extends beyond administrative policies and student support into **its academic curriculum**. Courses are designed to integrate diverse perspectives across disciplines rather than isolating them into standalone diversity courses.

For example:

- Psychology courses explore cultural influences on mental health and healing practices from non-Western traditions.
- Environmental studies examine environmental justice through the lens of historically marginalized communities.
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles are embedded in coursework across multiple departments, and support is given to members of the community need support in their work through resources such as the JEDI-Hub. [AA Syllabus Policies 121123](#), [JEDI Resource Hub](#)

Faculty are also encouraged to engage in ongoing professional development that addresses implicit bias and anti-racist pedagogy. [Summer JEDI Think Tank for Faculty 2021](#), [JEDI-100 Integration Workshop Staff Faculty](#).

Measuring Success Through Impact

A commitment to academic inclusivity is supported by Naropa's strong retention and graduation rates among members of marginalized communities, highlighting the university's success in creating a supportive and equitable learning experience ([JEDI Data Companion Doc](#)).

Conclusion

Through intentional hiring practices, comprehensive student support services, a curriculum enriched with diverse perspectives, and rigorous impact assessments, Naropa demonstrates a deep commitment to creating a more just and representative academic community.

To further enhance these efforts, the institution will continue refining its evaluation mechanisms, expanding training opportunities, and ensuring that equity remains central to its mission and daily practices. We will not repeat our current approach to diversity every time the term appears in the assurance argument but given the detail here we are offering the statement again.

1.C-3

At Naropa University, respect is not just a guiding principle—it is the foundation upon which our learning community thrives. This commitment is embedded in **Naropa Values**, fostering an environment where diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives are embraced as essential components of meaningful education and personal growth. Naropa actively cultivates respect through structured training, institutional policies, restorative practices, and community engagement, ensuring that every student, faculty member, staff member, and administrator experiences a culture of inclusion and dignity.

Respectful Dialogue as a Catalyst for Inner Discovery

Naropa's classrooms are intentionally designed as spaces for critical inquiry, where respectful debate and exploration of different viewpoints are encouraged. The university ensures faculty and students have the tools to engage in productive and respectful dialogue by providing structured training, classroom agreements, and policies that reinforce a culture of respect.

How We Foster Respectful Dialogue:

- [Faculty Training in Conflict Resolution and Restorative Practices](#): Professors are trained in conflict response plans and restorative ways of facilitating dialogue to create an environment where differing perspectives can be safely explored. This training has been offered twice to over 30 faculty members.
- **Proactive Classroom Agreements**: Faculty members are encouraged to develop community agreements with their students at the beginning of each semester, establishing shared expectations for respectful discourse ([Fall 2024 Guidebook for Faculty - Staff Restorative Conversations](#))
- **Conflict Response Planning**: The university provides guidelines and frameworks for addressing conflict within classrooms, ensuring that misunderstandings or disagreements are handled constructively and respectfully.

[Restorative Practices for Conflict Resolution and Growth](#)

At Naropa, conflict is seen as an opportunity for learning and growth rather than division. The university fosters a climate of respect by providing restorative justice mechanisms that prioritize healing and accountability.

How We Address and Repair Conflict Respectfully:

- **Restorative Conversations as a Primary Conflict Resolution Tool:** Rather than defaulting to punitive measures, Naropa encourages facilitated conversations where individuals can express concerns, acknowledge harm, and work toward resolution ([2022 Restorative Menu](#))
- **[Comprehensive Training in Restorative Practices](#):** Faculty, staff, and students have access to [training](#) in Restorative Conversation Facilitation, Nonviolent Communication (NVC), and Right Use of Power, equipping them with the skills to engage in difficult conversations with empathy and respect.
- **[The Community Repair and Support Team \(CReST\)](#):** Originally a volunteer-led initiative, CReST has evolved into a formalized program designed to train staff and students in conflict resolution, ensuring a culture of repair over punishment.

Respecting the Tapestry of Life: Environmental and Social Justice

At Naropa, respect extends beyond interpersonal relationships—it includes a responsibility toward environmental and social justice. By integrating eco-conscious practices into campus culture and curriculum, Naropa fosters an environment of mutual respect for all living beings and the planet.

How We Embed Environmental and Social Respect into Our Community:

- **Annual Earth Justice Week:** A week-long event dedicated to environmental sustainability, ecological ethics, and climate justice, reinforcing respect for the interconnectedness of life. [Earth Justice Week 2023 The Joanna Macy Center for Resilience and Regeneration](#), [Earth Justice Week 24](#)
- **Sustainability-Focused Curriculum:** Courses in environmental justice, regenerative ecology, and sustainability studies instill in students an awareness of their impact on the world and encourage responsible stewardship. [Environmental Ecology Courses](#)
- **[Campus Sustainability Initiatives](#):** Naropa has implemented green campus policies, waste reduction programs, and eco-friendly infrastructure that encourage students, faculty, and staff to engage in responsible environmental practices.

Inclusivity by Design: Policies and Training for Fair Treatment

Naropa ensures that respect is institutionalized through regularly reviewed policies and professional development initiatives that promote fairness, equity, and inclusion.

How We Ensure Policies and Training Promote Respect:

- **[Onboarding and Ongoing Training](#)**: Faculty and staff participate in ongoing professional development sessions that address implicit bias, inclusive pedagogy, and equitable treatment.
- **[Regular Review of Policies and Procedures](#)**: Institutional policies are continuously examined and revised to ensure fairness in academic and workplace environments.
- **[MCIC and Title IX Training Programs](#)**: The Division of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC) collaborates with the Title IX Office to offer training on equity, discrimination prevention, and respectful engagement in all interactions.

Ensuring Accessibility and Respect for All: ADA Compliance and Support

At Naropa University, fostering a climate of respect includes ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff—regardless of ability—[have full access to academic and campus resources](#). The university is committed to meeting and exceeding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, ensuring equitable participation for individuals with disabilities. [The Office of Accessibility Resources](#) provides comprehensive support, including academic accommodations, assistive technologies, and campus accessibility improvements to remove barriers to learning and engagement. Faculty and staff receive ongoing training on disability inclusion, equipping them with tools to create accessible classroom environments and navigate accommodation requests appropriately. Additionally, Naropa has implemented universal design principles in its curriculum and facilities to proactively meet diverse accessibility needs, ensuring that accommodations are not just reactive but part of the institution's foundational structure. In recent years, the university has enhanced accessibility across campus by upgrading physical spaces, increasing digital accessibility for online learning, and streamlining the accommodation request process for students by [investing in a new accommodations system, Symplicity Accommodate](#). To ensure accountability, Naropa conducts regular ADA compliance reviews and seeks feedback from students and employees with disabilities to continually improve accessibility efforts. These initiatives reflect Naropa's unwavering commitment to creating an environment where all individuals, regardless of ability, are respected, valued, and fully included in the university community.

Respecting Lived Experiences: Support for Marginalized Students

Respect at Naropa means ensuring that all students—particularly those from marginalized backgrounds—have access to safe, supportive, and affirming spaces.

How We Foster Respect for Diverse Identities and Experiences:

- **[The Culture Center](#) & [Affinity Groups](#)**: These spaces provide students from underrepresented backgrounds with a place to connect, share experiences, and access resources.
- **[Heritage Month Programming](#)**: Regular heritage and cultural celebration events are offered, both in person and through live-streaming, to ensure accessibility for online students.

- **[Scholarships and Support for Diverse Students](#)**: Financial aid and Living Learning Communities are available to ensure equitable access to education.

Empowering Voices, Inspiring Action

Naropa's commitment to respect empowers students, faculty, and staff to actively engage in advocacy, leadership, and creative expression.

How We Encourage Active Participation and Expression:

- **[Town Halls](#) & Open Forums**: Regularly scheduled [town halls](#) and open forums allow community members to voice concerns, propose solutions, and actively participate in shaping institutional policies. These events are structured to accommodate both in person and online participation. Attention is paid to online questions and comments by a dedicated online coordinator for each session
- **[Artistic Expression](#) as a Vehicle for Social Change**: Programs such as **Theater of the Oppressed, slam poetry, and social justice-themed art exhibits** allow students to explore complex societal issues through creative mediums.
- **Student Leadership and Activism Opportunities**: Students are encouraged to take leadership roles in [community engagement initiatives](#), [activism projects](#), and diversity committees.

Measuring the Impact of a Respectful Climate

Naropa evaluates the [success of its respect-driven initiatives](#) through [ongoing assessment](#) and feedback mechanisms.

Conclusion

Through structured training, policies, restorative practices, environmental initiatives, and student empowerment programs, Naropa University ensures that respect is deeply embedded in the institution's culture and daily operations. This commitment creates an environment where all members feel valued, heard, and empowered to contribute to a just and inclusive world.

Naropa is very aware of and closely following the fast-moving policy pronouncements by the US Department of Education, both those which may be enforceable and those which may require congressional or judicial action. As the enforceable policies become clearer we will take such actions as needed to modify syllabi, admissions criteria, student financial aid awards, and hiring policies in order to remain in compliance and remain as a participating Title IV institution. Naropa will take all possible steps to ensure any modifications keep us closely aligned with our Mission, Vision, and Values.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

Summary Strengths:

1. The current Mission, Vision, and Values statements that emphasize Naropa's commitment to holistic student development were developed through substantial input from all Naropa constituencies, including senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees.
2. The revision of the mission and the creation of related statements demonstrates the institution's continued commitment to contemplative education, diversity, inclusivity, and ecological sustainability. The creation of the division of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community emphasizes the University's priority of ensuring that Naropa's mission is integrated at all levels of the student experience and institutional practices in order to maintain the University's relevance and contribution to the broader world.
3. The community compass and Big 5 strategic priorities clearly articulate Naropa's institutional priorities and intended constituencies.
4. Academic programs and student support services are consistent with and reflect the institution's mission.
5. Naropa University shows strong evidence of engagement with the local community and responds to the need through programs like the Medicaid licensed Community Counseling Center, internships, capstone projects, environmental initiatives, practice day, the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE), and the Community Art Studio.
6. Naropa University offers various activities aimed at preparing students for citizenship and workplace success, including mock interviews, resume workshops, practica, internships, living learning communities, career immersion days, alumna panels, career and life development presentations in classes and other offerings.

Future Considerations:

1. Further the integration of the mission into program learning outcomes, cocurricular outcomes and incorporate into program reviews.
2. Further the communication on how financial resources are allocated to support the University's educational role and mission.
3. Further develop multicultural and socially transformative pedagogies and explore additional training for faculty and staff.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

2A-1

The content and process for developing the current Mission, Vision, and Values statements that guide university operations are detailed in section 1.A.1. These statements were formally approved by the Board of Trustees, ensuring alignment with the institution's strategic goals and ethical standards. The [Board Manual](#) and the [Eighth Amended Bylaws](#) establish guiding principles and include the Naropa Code of Conduct; the University's purpose, [mission, vision and values statements](#); and the corporate bylaws. The [manual outlines](#) the roles and responsibilities of the Board as well as the charge of [each board committee and](#) specifies that the board's role is to set the overall direction, mission, and goals of the university, without involving itself in daily operations, which are managed by the president and administration.

2A-2

Naropa University operates with a high degree of integrity across its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions, supported by comprehensive policies and transparent practices.

Financial Integrity

Naropa ensures financial integrity through a clear separation of duties within the Finance Office. The Chief Financial Officer, Controller, and Accountants each have access only to information pertinent to their roles, preventing conflicts of interest and ensuring accuracy through appropriate reviews/oversight. For instance, staff responsible for monthly reporting are distinct from those preparing checks, which require dual signatures for amounts over \$3,000 and proper documentation. This meticulous approach extends to Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and Human Resources and Payroll, where duties are similarly segregated. Additionally, ACH and wire transfers require secondary approvals within the banking system. Routine audits of vendor

payments are conducted by the Controller and Chief Financial Officer to ensure budget adherence and financial transparency.

The [budgeting process at Naropa is inclusive](#), involving input from faculty, staff, and board members at the [appropriate time](#). The Executive Leadership Committee, comprising vice presidents and senior employees including the Academic Deans, oversees strategic planning and budget allocation. The Board of Trustees, responsible for the institution's fiscal stability, [reviews](#) financial statements and budget-to-actual results regularly and approves the [final budget](#). The Board's Finance and Sustainability Committee meets monthly to monitor the university's financial health and ensure long-term sustainability.

The University engages the service of a **public accounting firm (Eide Bailly) to audit** its financial statements and its 403(b) deferred compensation plan, as well as to audit compliance under the [OMB super circular](#) guidelines for financial aid on an annual basis and a state audit every two years. In April or May the auditors meet to establish the annual schedule for providing information and on-site audits with the Accounting Office, Human Resources staff, and Student Financial Services. Eide Bailly conducts the audit between June and November, spending significant time on site; and provides an annual report ([2022](#), [2023](#), [2024](#)) to the Board at one of their meetings or through the Finance Committee. After the report is given, the Board or [Finance Committee](#) meets in private (without finance staff) with the auditors to discuss any areas of concern regarding staff management and oversight. No such areas of concern or disagreement between the auditors and management were noted. Eide Bailly is also available throughout the year as a resource for any specialized audit/compliance, tax, or accounting questions that may arise, allowing the University to resolve many of these issues at inception.

For the years of [2021](#) and [2022](#), the University filed their financial statements after the March 31 deadline required by the Department of Education (DOE). This resulted in the DOE imposing sanctions on the University, including the requirement to obtain a letter of credit in the amount of 10% of the Title IV funds and the mandated use of the reimbursement method for the drawdown of Title IV funds. Since that time, new leadership has been appointed in the finance function. The new [Chief Financial Officer](#) comes to the University with extensive higher education experience totaling more than 15 years and nearly a decade of executive finance experience. Under this new leadership, the delinquent financial statement audits were completed and the [2023 financial statements issued before the March 31, 2024, deadline](#). Management does not expect any further delinquent financial statement filings with the Department of Education.

Naropa approaches fundraising within the framework of the [Donor Bill of Rights](#). It is a priority to put the donor first and find ways that donors' interests align with the University's, while also satisfying standards for gift counting set by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules for what qualifies as a gift. Naropa has developed gift acceptance policies and naming policies that align with the [CASE Reporting Standards & Management Guidelines](#).

Naropa's Development Office adheres to a two-person system for gift processing. The Data and Research Manager opens and processes gifts, which are then given to the Accounts Payable Manager, who verifies each transaction. This process ensures that each gift is seen by two staff

members so that it is accurately entered and properly designated. All gifts are audited jointly each month by the Development and the Business & Finance Offices. In the case of some federal grants such as the current Title III Strengthening Institutions grant there is a requirement that Naropa engage a third party [evaluator](#) to report on a regular basis. We are now in the final year of this 5 year grant and the reports have consistently been positive. Gift backup is kept on file for auditing purposes. The Development Office works closely with the Business & Finance Office to track gift funds as they are being spent, to ensure that the University continues to honor donor intent.

Academic Integrity

Naropa maintains academic integrity through transparent admissions procedures and accessible information. Procedures for admission for [undergraduate](#), [graduate](#), [transfer](#), and [international students](#) are outlined on the University's website. The [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) sections of the Admissions page provide information to undergraduate, graduate, and transfer students pertaining to issues including the transfer of credits, Naropa's accreditation status, acceptance of high school diploma equivalency, cost, demographics, and general alumni information.

The Admissions pages also provide [international students](#) with information pertaining to the requirements they must meet and documents that must be provided to study in the United States. Information regarding the type of monetary aid available to Naropa students, as well as how to apply for aid, is found on the [Cost and Aid](#) section of the Admissions page ([Undergraduate Costs](#), [Graduate Costs](#), [Net Price Calculator](#)); and the [Consumer Right-to-Know](#) information is centrally located on the Naropa website.

The [Naropa student handbook](#) informs students of university policies pertaining to the student experience. Also found in the student handbook is the View of Right Action, available student resources, policies related to prohibited behaviors such as plagiarism and academic dishonesty, the judicial affairs process, grading, advising, academic support, as well as alcohol and other drug policies. The [Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Nondiscrimination Policy](#) applies to all students, employees and third parties in a business relationship with Naropa and sets forth applicable procedures for addressing complaints pertaining to protected class discrimination and harassment. This policy along with the student handbook are readily available to students and employees on MyNaropa and [Naropa.edu](#).

Students are informed of academic policies through the publication of the [course catalog](#). The course catalog is easily found on MyNaropa and the Naropa website and enables students to find programs, academic requirements, and specific course information. The [course schedule](#), which is published each semester and also found in Student Self-Service through MyNaropa, provides students with information related to each course offered during the semester, the number of credits per course, the course location, days and hours offered, the name of the faculty member providing instruction, and dates for the drop/add and withdrawal periods.

In the Graduate School of Counseling, students are governed by the [Student Guidebook](#) which outlines programmatic policies. Included therein are policies related to professional disposition

expectations, including ethical and competency requirements, and gatekeeping responsibilities related to a professional licensure program. As part of the University's goals as well as the broader ethical obligations of licensed mental health counselors in graduate training programs, the Student Guidebook includes a [Concern, Probation and Dismissal Policy](#) which allows students to receive feedback on areas of development in need of remediation and/or support with the goal of improving performance and maintaining engagement with the program. In some instances, the Concern, Probation and Dismissal process may result in probation or lead to dismissal from a GSC program.

Human Resources and Personnel Practices:

University policies are outlined in the [employee handbook](#), [faculty handbook](#), and [student handbook](#). The Naropa University Board of Trustees is governed by [the Eighth Amended Bylaws](#), which were updated and adopted in 2019, and the Board of Trustees Manual.

The primary source of information for all University personnel is the [employee handbook](#). The employee handbook outlines University policies as they relate to the employment relationship, such as terms of employment, evaluation, compensation, benefits, dispute resolution, nondiscrimination, the University organizational structure, and general University policies. The employee handbook is easily accessible via the university's internal internet: MyNaropa. Additionally, the "Employee" page of MyNaropa provides general payroll and benefit information, the schedule for University trainings, the HR monthly newsletter, employment forms, and easy access to the employee handbook and additional University employment policies. The "Administrative Departments" tab on MyNaropa provides employees with access to operating procedures integral to each department, such as policies and forms related to purchasing and reimbursement, course fees, contracting, hiring independent contractors, conducting performance appraisals, and accessing assistance with events or marketing needs.

The faculty, as employees of the University, [are bound by the terms of the employee handbook](#). That is clearly stated on page two of the faculty handbook.

In addition, the faculty handbook outlines policies and procedures that are specific to the role of faculty within the University structure. The faculty handbook sets forth information pertaining to faculty rank, promotion, committee structure and assignment, governance, academic freedom, separation and severance, grievance procedures, and other general faculty guidelines. The faculty senate (Cauldron) is working toward the approval of a new procedure for review and implementation of updates to the handbook. This review procedure includes a period of review and input by the president's office to ensure compliance with other University policies and federal, state, and local regulations.

Faculty members are also guided and governed by the terms of [faculty contracts](#), which are given as either "Multi-Year Core Faculty Contracts," "Core Candidate Contracts," or "Visiting Instructor Contracts."

The [Board of Trustees Manual](#) and [Board Bylaws](#) establish guiding principles by which the board shall act, including the Naropa Code of Conduct and View of Right Action, the mission

statement, and the corporate bylaws. The manual outlines each board committee and its charge. Importantly, the manual specifies that the role of the board is to set the overall direction, mission, and goals of the University and to not involve itself in the daily operations of the institution, which is within the auspice of the president and administration. Additionally, the board is bound by the Conflict-of-Interest Policy, which requires trustees to disclose potential conflicts and to abstain from any decisions that may be applicable to the conflict.

Auxiliary Functions

Naropa University operates few auxiliary services. These services include the University's self-operation of the Snow Lion and 2333 Residence Halls. University policies apply to each auxiliary function. The student handbook references general information regarding student housing. Students residing in the residence halls are provided with the [Residence Hall Terms and Conditions](#), policies and procedures specific to residence life. The handbook is provided to each tenant at the start of their leasehold. Additionally, Snow Lion residents are guided and governed by the term of each student's [residential housing lease](#), which sets forth fee and security deposit information, lease termination policies and procedures, as well as Boulder County, Colorado, landlord tenant rights and obligations. All residence life employees are governed by the employee handbook. Naropa University does not self-operate food service. However, Naropa's food service vendor is bound, via the terms of the food service contract, to abide and insure its employees abide by university policy.

Legal Compliance and Risk Management:

Naropa retains external legal counsel and employs a Special Advisor to the President who is a lawyer (not licensed in Colorado) for institutional compliance and risk management. The Special Advisor regularly meets with the institutional stakeholders to facilitate communication and institutional response for a broad array of risk management needs. This cross-functional work allows for institution-wide support for addressing concerns. The [Special Advisor to the President is a member of the Executive Leadership Council](#) and works closely with the Board, President, and Vice Presidents to identify risks to the University at the highest level. The Special Advisor also works closely with external legal counsel to support the internal management of pending legal matters.

Transparency and Accountability

To ensure transparency and accessibility of information, Naropa utilizes [MyNaropa](#), a centralized platform providing consistent and accessible information from all departments. This platform ensures that both students and employees have easy access to important [policies, procedures, and updates](#). The President, Chief of Staff, and Board of Trustees also communicate with faculty and staff consistently to ensure transparency and accountability regarding University operations. This includes meetings of the faculty senate, [staff executive council](#), [meetings with the Board](#), and other University committees. Each semester, students review and sign an enrollment agreement outlining costs and limitations of their chosen academic program(s). Students in the Graduate School of Counseling also sign a [Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#)

[Agreement](#) each semester which prompts students in this licensure program to review federally required disclosures pertaining to licensure programs.

Non-Discrimination and Ethical Conduct:

Clear non-discrimination policies are set forth in all handbooks including the [Equal Opportunity, Harassment](#), and [Nondiscrimination Policy](#). The University employs a [Civil Rights Compliance and Title IX](#) Coordinator and [requires regular training on harassment and discrimination prevention](#). The [View of Right Action](#) serves as an ethical framework for the entire University community while applicable conduct codes, found in the employee and student handbooks, set forth behavioral expectations of employees and students. A [Whistle Blower Protection Policy](#) and anonymous reporting system are in place to ensure community members can report concerns without fear of retaliation.

While Naropa demonstrates strong integrity in its operations, there are areas for improvement. The University could benefit from more robust onboarding courses for faculty and staff. The University is also committing to conduct more regular internal audits and reviews to ensure consistent policy implementation across departments and to ensure policies remain relevant and effective in addressing current and emerging issues.

In conclusion, Naropa University operates with a strong commitment to integrity across its financial, academic, human resources, and auxiliary functions. Through comprehensive policies, transparent processes, and a dedication to ethical conduct, Naropa demonstrates its commitment to maintaining high standards of integrity in all aspects of its operations.

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

2B-1

The primary manner by which Naropa presents itself to prospective students and their families, the public, and other external constituents is online. The website ([Naropa.edu](https://naropa.edu)) is organized in a manner that allows constituents easy access to information and provides information regarding Naropa's mission and values, academic programs, undergraduate and graduate admissions criteria, undergraduate and graduate cost and financial aid information, information pertaining to licensure programs, and accreditation status. Pages are optimized for mobile viewing, and they follow a templated format to ease navigation and comparison. Faculty are listed in the course catalog as well as within each [degree program](#) and on a searchable [Faculty webpage](#). Staff are listed on the website as part of the division in which they work.

The [Student Right to Know section](#) of the website provides current and prospective students with easy access to important information about the University, including annual security and fire safety reports, institutional accreditation, university policies and complaint procedures, student outcomes, and financial assistance.

The internal portal, my.naropa.edu, provides additional role-based information relevant to internal constituents, such as support services, campus activities, course requirements and registration information for students, Board of Trustees documents, faculty academic committee minutes, and other policies, procedures, and documentation for faculty, staff, and students.

2B-2

Naropa University ensures the availability of evidence to support its claims regarding contributions to educational experience through [research](#), community engagement, experiential learning, spiritual purpose, and economic development. This is achieved through a variety of co-curricular activities, community engagement opportunities, and comprehensive documentation of these efforts, as detailed on its website and various institutional documents.

Community Engagement and Experiential Learning

Naropa places a strong emphasis on community engagement and experiential learning, integrating these elements into both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate programs](#). Students in undergraduate programs participate in service-learning opportunities, field-placement experiences, [internships](#), practicum, and other volunteer placements. These experiences allow students to apply classroom insights to real-world challenges, fostering practical skills and community impact.

Practicum and internships are integral components of most graduate programs, and required for licensure as a MA level counselor, providing professional training while addressing community needs in areas such as counseling, and chaplaincy. Graduate students from the Graduate School of Counseling dedicate thousands of hours annually to work in a variety of [practicum and internship sites](#) that provide important opportunities to gain professional experience and engage in the broader community. Students in the Master of Divinity program also complete internships through the [Center for Contemplative Chaplaincy](#), which received accreditation and a satisfactory review from the [Association for Clinical Pastoral Education \(ACPE\)](#) in 2023

As outlined further in section 3.C.7, the [Office of Career and Life Development](#) supports students in these activities and tracks students' involvement, ensuring they contribute meaningfully to the educational experience.

Co-Curricular Activities and Student Engagement

From the moment a student attends [New Student Orientation](#), the Office of Student Affairs begins to orient students to the co-curricular opportunities available to them at Naropa. We make it clear that their educational journey is not limited to lessons learned inside of the classroom, and we make services available to ensure their co-curricular experience is equally meaningful and valuable. Naropa University has a robust list of student organizations that evolves each term based on student interest and availability. All registered student groups are open to any member of the University community and must abide by various risk management protocols, contribute to the cultural and social fabric of campus, and maintain alignment with the mission of Naropa University. In addition, we offer a Student Group Orientation to support students in understanding how to create and sustain student organizations.

Naropa's student government, the [Student Union of Naropa \(SUN\)](#), is critical to student engagement. SUN is a student-run organization that operates within Naropa University for the benefit of the student body. With approximately nine officers, SUN aspires to make sure the student voice is influential in the creation of University policy, serving as a liaison between students and the University regarding advocacy, inclusivity, budget decisions, curricular decisions, and more. SUN meets weekly and all community members are invited to attend. It also meets on a scheduled basis with the Executive Leadership Council. SUN is supported by the Dean of Students and Director of Campus Life.

One impactful program has been the [Naropa Engagement Awards](#). The intention of the annual Naropa Engagement Awards celebration is to recognize and honor students and student groups who significantly contribute to a vibrant student life culture. The Naropa Engagement Awards also acknowledges outstanding student group advisors, faculty, and staff who encourage and

support students in co-curricular activities and leadership development. This event generates energy and excitement, and hopefully incentive, around engagement in student groups, student government, events, and other opportunities for development and community-building beyond the classroom.

Office of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC)

The mission of the [Office of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community](#) is to co-create beloved community through critical consciousness-raising and cultural transformation. Although initially MCIC focused exclusively on diversity and inclusion efforts, it is now the hub for social justice, sustainability, contemplative practices and traditions.

Sustainability events at Naropa provide community-building and awareness of sustainability issues for the entire university. Annual events such as [Earth Justice Day](#) and [Community Resilience Day](#) provide opportunities for the Naropa community to be more involved in university sustainability efforts. MCIC also operates the [Naropa Bike Shack](#) where we offer bike repairs and loaner bikes to the Naropa community to aid with clean air transportation needs. The [Joanna Macy Center for Resilience and Regeneration \(JMCR\)](#) offers services that support sustainability, spiritual development, and community engagement, including eco-chaplain services, the [Joanna Macy Fellowship Program](#), and zero waste initiatives.

The [Office of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community \(MCIC\)](#) also plays a crucial role in fostering spiritual development and contemplative practices. It coordinates regular offerings such as Monday Meditation sessions at both campus' and online, Community of Practice Gatherings every Wednesday, and [Tea House Ceremony](#). [The Community Practice Day](#), held each semester, is dedicated to contemplative practice, social justice, and community building. Additionally, all university events include a contemplative aspect, ensuring that contemplative awareness is woven into the fabric of the institution.

Naropa University effectively meets both core components of Criterion 2, which emphasizes integrity in its operations and public presentations. The university provides clear and accessible information through its comprehensive website, detailing its mission, academic programs, admissions criteria, costs, financial aid, and accreditation status. An internal portal further ensures that all constituents have access to relevant resources. Naropa offers substantial evidence of its contributions to the educational experience through a variety of co-curricular activities, community engagement, and experiential learning programs, integrated into both undergraduate and graduate studies. The institution's efforts to continuously improve its documentation and assessment processes further underscore its commitment to integrity and accountability in its operations.

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

2C-1

Naropa University's governing Board is [trained and knowledgeable](#) so that it makes informed decisions and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. The board has [16 members as of February 2025](#), which falls within the stipulated range of 9 to 27 trustees, including faculty and student representatives. The Board's diverse composition encompasses a broad array of constituencies, including [alumni](#), parents of students, community members, and [industry leaders](#), ensuring that various perspectives and interests are represented in decision-making processes.

Trustees are appointed for four-year [terms](#), with the possibility of re-election for two additional terms, while the student trustee serves a two-year term and the faculty trustee a three-year term. This structure balances continuity with fresh perspectives, allowing the board to remain dynamic and responsive to the institution's needs. Regular board meetings and committee sessions keep the Board of Trustees informed about institutional matters, and the [faculty and student trustees provide reports at each meeting](#) to ensure that academic and student perspectives are consistently considered.

The board's committee structure enhances its oversight capabilities, as exemplified by the [Finance and Sustainability Committee](#), which [meets monthly](#) to review financial reports. This active engagement demonstrates the board's commitment to fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities, as it closely monitors the institution's financial health and sustainability through the review of financial benchmarks for both general operations and auxiliary enterprises.

Furthermore, the board's bylaws allow trustees to [resign with written notice or be removed by a two-thirds majority vote](#), ensuring that board members are held accountable for their performance. Overall, these practices illustrate how Naropa University's governing board is structured and operates effectively to make informed decisions regarding the institution's financial and academic policies, thereby fulfilling its legal and fiduciary duties.

2C-2

The Board's governance structure, as outlined in the [8th Amended Bylaws](#), Board of Trustee Manual, and [Conflict-of-Interest Policy](#), demonstrates a clear commitment to preserving and enhancing the institution.

The [Board of Trustee Manual](#) explicitly defines the trustees' primary responsibilities, which include determining the university's mission, goals, and strategies. This foundational role ensures that the Board's deliberations are centered on preserving Naropa's core identity while guiding its growth and development. The manual's operating rules further reinforce this commitment by stipulating that the Board approves the University's strategic plan, policies, initiatives, and resource allocations to advance Naropa's stability, viability, and goals.

The Board's role as "guardians of the Naropa mission" is a clear indication of its dedication to preserving the institution's unique character and purpose. By delineating [boundaries between the Board and administration](#), the manual ensures that trustees remain focused on high-level strategic decisions that enhance the university's long-term prospects.

The Board's [regular review](#) and approval of the University's audit, [tuition rates, discount rates, and annual operating budget](#) demonstrate its active engagement in preserving Naropa's financial health and sustainability. These deliberations reflect a priority of maintaining the institution's viability while ensuring it can continue to fulfill its mission.

Furthermore, [the Conflict-of-Interest Policy](#) and the requirement for trustees to adhere to the View of Right Action underscore the Board's commitment to ethical governance. By mandating annual conflict disclosures and prohibiting trustees from participating in decisions where conflicts exist, the Board ensures that its deliberations and decisions are always made in the best interests of Naropa University.

This comprehensive governance framework, coupled with the Board's clearly defined responsibilities and ethical standards, provides strong evidence that Naropa University's governing board consistently deliberates with the priority of preserving and enhancing the institution

2C-3

Naropa University's governing board effectively reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations. This inclusive approach is supported by the presence of a faculty and student trustee, both of whom are voting members of the board. The faculty trustee is nominated by Cauldron, and the

student trustee is nominated by the student government, and each is elected by the Board in accordance with Board practice. At each board meeting, the [faculty and student trustees present reports](#) outlining areas of interest or concern from student and faculty ensuring that these perspectives are consistently considered in board deliberations. We recognize that having voting student and faculty trustees is not the norm in higher education but the model has served Naropa well since 1987.

The board's [committee structure](#) further supports the inclusion of various constituencies. The board currently consists of five committees: the [Executive Committee](#), [Governance and Trusteeship Committee](#), [Academic Enrichment Committee](#), [Outreach and Development Committee](#), and [Finance and Sustainability Committee](#) (which includes the Audit Committee) as well as a [Presidential Search Committee](#), which will be active through spring of 2025. Each trustee serves on one to two committees, with assignments reflecting their stakeholder positions. For example, the student trustee typically participates in the Academic Enrichment Committee, directly contributing to discussions on academic matters.

Additionally, each committee has an appointed chair or co-chair, and a member of the President's [Executive Leadership Council](#) serves as a liaison between the relevant board committee and the administration. [This structure](#) facilitates open and ongoing communication between the administration and the board, ensuring that the board remains well-informed about the institution's operations and stakeholder concerns. For instance, the Chief Financial Officer serves as the administrative liaison to the Finance and Sustainability Committee, while the VP of Development Enrollment and Student Success liaises with the Outreach and Development Committee.

Moreover, some sessions of board meetings may be open to the university community, and community members may be invited to dialogue with the board. [Gatherings or meals with stakeholder groups are often held during these meetings, providing more opportunities for community members to speak directly with trustees](#). This inclusive approach ensures that the board's deliberations are informed by a wide range of perspectives, reflecting the interests of both internal and external constituencies, and thereby enhancing the institution's decision-making processes.

2C-4

Naropa University effectively preserves its governing board's independence from undue influence by external parties through several key measures. As a private institution, Naropa operates without investors, parent organizations, or supporting external interests that might seek financial returns, ensuring that the university's sole focus remains on providing contemplative education.

The absence of financial ties to external entities significantly reduces the risk of outside pressure on the board's decision-making processes. This independence is further reinforced by the fact that Naropa does not make financial contributions to any parent organization or external interests, eliminating potential conflicts that could arise from such financial relationships.

To safeguard against individual conflicts of interest, all trustees are bound by a robust [Conflict of Interest Policy](#). This policy requires annual disclosures of potential conflicts, ensuring transparency and accountability among board members. Moreover, [trustees with business or other relationships that may conflict with the best interests of the institution are required to abstain from any decisions related to those potential conflicts](#). This practice prevents trustees from using their positions to advance personal or external interests at the University's expense. Through these measures, Naropa University demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining the autonomy and integrity of its governing board.

2C-5

Naropa University effectively demonstrates that its governing board delegates day-to-day management to the institution's administration and expects faculty to oversee academic matters. This delegation of responsibilities is clearly outlined in the University's governance documents and practices.

The [Eighth Amended Bylaws](#) reserve general oversight powers to the Board of Trustees, while the Board of Trustee Manual explicitly states that the board's [primary responsibilities](#) do not include daily operational management. Instead, the manual clearly delineates that day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the Naropa administration and faculty.

The board manual emphasizes this separation of duties, stating, "While the Board sets the University's overall direction, mission, and goals, it does not involve itself in the University's normal operations and decision-making, as these are the province of the President and his or her administration." This clear distinction ensures that the board maintains its strategic oversight role without interfering in daily operations.

Furthermore, the manual describes the board's intention to function collaboratively with the administration and faculty, respecting their prerogatives and roles in university governance. This collaborative approach is exemplified by the [Academic Enrichment Committee](#), which works with faculty and administration to ensure high-quality academic programs that align with Naropa's mission.

The manual also explicitly addresses the boundary between the board and administration, emphasizing that the President and Administration are ["fully responsible and empowered for daily operations and decisions, following the guidelines and policies established by the Board."](#) This principle of separation is described as critical to a successful board-administration relationship.

To maintain this separation while ensuring informed decision-making, the University encourages open communication between trustees and the Naropa community. However, individual trustees are cautioned against undercutting the administration's decision-making authority or becoming involved in operations-level decisions.

This governance structure demonstrates Naropa University's commitment to appropriate delegation of responsibilities, allowing the board to focus on strategic oversight while entrusting

day-to-day management to the administration and academic matters to the faculty (See Section 3A and 3C for information on Naropa's [catalog change procedure](#) demonstrating faculty oversight of the curriculum). This approach ensures effective governance and operational efficiency, meeting the requirements of delegating day-to-day management and academic oversight as specified in the criterion.

Naropa University's governing board demonstrates full compliance with Criterion 2.C. The board's structure, policies, and practices ensure it is well-trained, knowledgeable, and capable of making informed decisions that prioritize the institution's best interests. Through its diverse composition, regular meetings, and committee structure, the board effectively preserves and enhances the institution while considering the interests of both internal and external constituencies. The university's private status, coupled with robust conflict of interest policies, safeguards the board's independence from undue external influence. Furthermore, the clear delineation of responsibilities between the board, administration, and faculty ensures proper delegation of day-to-day management and academic oversight. These comprehensive measures collectively affirm Naropa University's commitment to autonomous, ethical, and effective governance.

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

2D

Naropa University demonstrates a strong commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. This commitment is deeply embedded in the institution's policies, mission, and overall approach to education.

The [faculty handbook](#) serves as a cornerstone document, containing two dedicated sections on academic freedom. Notably, it addresses the intersection of [academic freedom](#) with the evolving digital landscape, recognizing that the principles of academic freedom transcend technological advancements while acknowledging the need to [evaluate new technologies for their potential impact on these core values](#). This approach ensures that academic freedom remains protected and relevant in an increasingly digital academic environment. Naropa's commitment is further solidified by its adoption of principles from the 1940 joint statement on academic freedom by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges. This alignment with widely recognized standards underscores the university's dedication to upholding academic freedom for all faculty members.

Naropa also includes a specific [clause in faculty contracts](#) prohibiting the infringement of another's academic freedom. This contractual protection demonstrates the university's willingness to legally enforce its commitment to academic freedom, providing a robust safeguard for faculty members.

The University's mission statement explicitly articulates its commitment to freedom of expression and the pursuit of knowledge, serving as a guiding principle for academic work and expectations across all levels of the institution. This commitment is not merely rhetorical but is integrated into the fabric of Naropa's educational approach, [particularly through its focus on contemplative education](#). Foundational to the contemplative disciplines is dropping pre-conceptions in order to be fully present and open to unfiltered experiences which is resonant with freedom. By valuing lifelong learning and open inquiry, contemplative education naturally aligns with and reinforces the principles of academic freedom.

Sources

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

2E-1

Naropa is primarily focused on teaching, but support for basic and applied research and maintenance of standards/oversight does occur through the [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB).

2E-2

Naropa is committed to supporting faculty and student research in substantive ways. Because research is one of the hallmarks of how all universities contribute to the well-being and sustainability of society, Naropa is engaged in numerous activities to advance this cause. Activities include assisting faculty with specific study proposals, [working with the Office of Academic Affairs](#) to offer [development grants](#) that enable faculty to pursue research, scholarship, and creative work, pairing with the Development Office to find funding for research studies, hosting graduate and undergraduate research presentations where students describe capstone projects, and hosting faculty salons where research is read and discussed.

[Naropa University has an Institutional Review Board \(IRB\), comprising of a rotating group of four faculty and staff members.](#) The Naropa University Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a federally mandated review body, composed of locally constituted members, whose purpose is to provide institutional oversight for the ethical conduct of research. [This oversight occurs to safeguard the dignity, rights, and welfare of human subjects who participate in research.](#) The principles governing the structure and procedures of the IRB are based on the regulations that comply with federal standards. These include the Code of Federal Regulations (Title 45, Part 46) and the Belmont Report (1979).

The [Naropa University IRB overviews](#) the ethical conduct of research with human subjects conducted: (1) by our faculty, staff, administration, or students; (2) with community members affiliated with Naropa serving as subjects; or (3) at Naropa facilities. An IRB review will not

consider the research design, guiding research questions, nor other factors unless these may impact the ethical conduct or legal implications of the research.

The [IRB page of MyNaropa](#) provides general information about human subjects' research, when the IRB is needed, and how to engage in the process. All researchers, including faculty, staff, and students applying for review to the IRB must first complete an [online training module](#) linked on MyNaropa and take an online quiz as proof that they understand the fundamentals of IRB project proposals. The training and additional documentation provided on MyNaropa serve to effectively guide Naropa researchers through the IRB process.

The IRB proposals received by the committee come mostly from [faculty conducting research projects, as well as graduate students doing thesis research](#). All [Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) Somatic concentration students engage in original research in their third year as a concentration requirement, but most research is theoretical. All BA Art Therapy students [conduct capstone research projects](#). Most [undergraduate](#) research is done as a requirement for classes (such as a Research Methods course) and does not require IRB review or exemption.

Over the years, we have continued to [offer more training opportunities and resources](#), such as [recording videos, training documents, and timely communications for sharing within our community and within the classroom setting](#)—especially for research-oriented courses. Moreover, in recognizing gaps between our community's ideal ethical standards and those more generalized standards outlined at the federal level, Naropa's IRB added the following to its charge in 2022:

"We strive to align our charge with Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity related policy, procedure, and internal process. To that end, we commit to ongoing study within our committee to grow and expand our critical consciousness, as well as extending the standard ethical principles with the following:

- *Respect for persons: The Naropa IRB strives to enhance researcher reflexivity, cultural humility, and self-reflection in order to bring critical awareness to assumptions, biases, and other such factors that may cause harm. Additionally, we encourage best practices for respecting human subjects through methods such as member checking, community collaboration, and reciprocity.*
- *Beneficence: The overarching guiding principle of beneficence is to ensure the benefits of the study for the individual, group, or community outweighs any risks of participation. To that end, the Naropa IRB committee also considers the role of cultural competence in all research proposals, particularly those involving the study of marginalized populations. This may include utilizing participant or community-centric design and implementation, the development of research questions or hypotheses with an aim to benefit the group or community being studied, recruitment and outreach strategies that highlight transparency around research aims, culturally-informed data collection protocols, indication that results will be analyzed and interpreted as they relate to the community impacted, and a clear demonstration of reciprocity.*

- *Justice: Recognizing the historical legacy of harm in research has disproportionately affected BIPOC communities, as well as other marginalized populations, we strive to serve as an IRB that not only mitigates such harm, but also actively promotes social justice. This includes, but is not limited to, encouraging researcher reflexivity, inclusive data collection methods, and attention to ways research could expand its benefits to marginalized groups. As an aspiration, we endeavor to advance a vibrant research community that sees research as a strategy for positive social change, whether through highlighting injustice, centering the perspectives and lived experiences of conventionally underrepresented groups and communities, or supporting transformative policies and practices. "*

2E-3

Naropa University offers students guidance in the [ethical use of information](#) resources through a multifaceted approach that integrates [library instruction, writing support, and dedicated coursework](#). [The Allen Ginsberg Library plays a pivotal role by providing information literacy instruction sessions to students at all levels](#). First-year undergraduates receive a two-and-a-half-hour session that covers a general overview of research resources, while more specialized sessions are available upon request, particularly during capstone and thesis courses. These sessions ensure that students understand how to use information responsibly and ethically from the outset of their academic journey.

Additionally, [Naropa's Writing Center supports students in mastering citation techniques and general research practices](#). Undergraduate students are required to utilize the Writing Center at least once per semester during their introductory writing seminar (COR110), reinforcing the importance of ethical writing and research practices. The Writing Center, staffed by graduate students who excelled in writing pedagogy, [continues to offer voluntary support](#) throughout a student's academic career, including for low-residency students via online platforms.

Naropa's curriculum further embeds ethical considerations through required capstone courses ([COR-340](#) and [COR-440](#)), where students engage in extensive research and apply ethical frameworks to their scholarly work. These courses culminate in projects that demonstrate ethical research practices and are presented publicly, underscoring the importance of ethical standards in information sharing. Moreover, specific courses in various disciplines, such as research methods in psychology and sustainability science in environmental studies, include units on the ethical use of information, ensuring that students across all programs receive consistent and thorough guidance.

Graduate programs, particularly in the [Graduate School of Counseling](#), also emphasize ethical research and information use. Students undertake practice counseling sessions with informed consent protocols and learn to manage confidential client files ethically. Ethical decision-making models are introduced as part of their case conceptualization skills in their fieldwork courses. All graduate programs in the graduate collective also include thesis or capstone courses that provide guidance to students on the ethics of research and use of information resources. This holistic approach, combining library resources, writing support, and curriculum requirements, ensures

that Naropa students are well-prepared to handle information responsibly in their academic and professional endeavors.

2E-4

Naropa University demonstrates a clear commitment to [academic honesty and integrity](#) through several key policies and practices. The [student handbook explicitly outlines the university's expectations regarding academic honesty and integrity](#), defining academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, as violations of the Community Code of Conduct. The university has established clear judicial processes for addressing cases of academic dishonesty, ensuring a fair and consistent approach to handling such issues. Additionally, a specific plagiarism policy available on MyNaropa provides faculty with clear guidelines on how to address suspected cases of plagiarism.

Faculty members are encouraged to include statements about plagiarism and academic dishonesty in their syllabi, reinforcing the importance of academic integrity across all courses. Naropa also promotes copyright compliance by encouraging faculty to apply fair use principles when selecting materials for Online Sourcebooks, with librarians available for consultation on copyright issues. In response to the growing prevalence of artificial intelligence, Naropa has formed an [AI Task Force](#) to review and [develop policies on AI](#) use in both academic and professional contexts.

Furthermore, the [University's CARE support request system allows any community member to report concerns about behavior that undermines the university's mission](#), including ethical issues in the classroom or broader university environment. These policies and practices collectively demonstrate that Naropa University not only has established guidelines for [academic honesty](#) and integrity but also actively enforces them through various channels. The university's approach encompasses clear communication of expectations, support for faculty in upholding these standards, and mechanisms for addressing violations when they occur.

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2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Summary Strengths:

1. The current Mission, Vision, and Values statements that emphasize Naropa's commitment to holistic student development were developed through substantial input from all Naropa constituencies, including senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the Board of Trustees.
2. Board members are trained and knowledgeable, with regular (and special) meetings as needed and training sessions to ensure informed decisions are taken on financial and academic policies.
3. As a private, nonprofit institution, Naropa does not have investors or parent organizations, ensuring decisions are made solely in the institution's best interest.
4. Transparency is maintained through annual meetings with staff, faculty, and student representation on the Board of Trustees.
5. The institution has comprehensive policies and procedures in updated student, faculty, and employee handbooks.
6. A dedicated Title IX Coordinator oversees compliance and annual training to create a culture of respect.

Future Considerations:

1. Further the providing of a systematic way to communicate, update and approve policies.
2. Further the providing of a consistent distribution of policy updates, and the providing of training on policy changes for all employees.
3. Further the collection of the assessment of co-curricular activities.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

3A-1

At Naropa University, all degree programs are designed to be current, rigorous, and aligned with the standards of higher education. The currency and rigor of our academic programs are maintained through systematic processes. For instance, the Bachelor of Arts degree requires a minimum of 120 credit hours, following the higher education standard, and mandates a minimum GPA of 2.0. For graduate degrees, credit hour requirements are tailored to meet specific disciplinary norms and accreditation standards, with a minimum GPA of 2.7 required for all graduate programs.

Performance expectations increase progressively across degree levels. Undergraduate students are required to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 and complete a senior capstone project. In contrast, graduate students must sustain a minimum GPA of 2.7 and complete a master's level project or thesis, depending on the program. Graduate programs leading to licensure or certification also mandate professional practicums and internships, as specified by external accrediting agencies: The MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) with a Transpersonal Art-Based Counseling concentration is accredited by the American Art Therapy Association. Similarly, the MA CMHC with a Dance/Movement Therapy concentration is accredited by the American Dance Therapy Association. Additionally, Naropa's Center for Contemplative Chaplaincy achieved official accreditation from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the national credentialing body for chaplaincy education.

Student learning outcomes at both the course and program levels are tailored to each academic level and discipline. [Undergraduate program requirements](#) are structured across "Gateway," "Milestone," and "Capstone" courses to ensure proper sequencing and competency building. [Program learning outcomes](#) are [assessed](#) at the "[Capstone](#)" level through senior [capstone papers and projects](#).

Naropa's faculty, well-credentialed in their respective fields, are crucial to delivering the institution's unique contemplative pedagogy. [Faculty members undergo regular evaluations](#) through an annual review process and are expected to remain current in their disciplines. To support this, faculty are provided with [annual development grants](#) and access to internal professional development opportunities through various centers and offices, including Mission Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC) Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE), and the Innovative Teaching Lab within the [Office of Educational Technologies](#) (see 3.C).

[Any proposed changes to the curriculum or program offerings](#) must pass through a rigorous review and approval process. Depending on the extent of the changes, proposals may involve creating or deactivating courses, modifying existing courses, changing degree requirements, or proposing new degree or certificate programs. These proposals are submitted through Naropa's [online submission system](#) and reviewed by appropriate faculty and administrative committees. The Office of Academic Affairs provides a website with guidance for faculty on curriculum changes and new program development, including [detailed timelines and steps](#) for each type of change. Since the last accreditation visit, improvements have been made to the curriculum change proposal and approval process, including the adoption of an online submission system using Smartsheet and the development of [rubrics](#) to guide the review of proposals. These [rubrics](#) ensure consistent standards are met across all proposals, and are [reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee](#).

The currency of courses is maintained through regular reviews and revisions by faculty. [Syllabi are updated and submitted for approval by the Academic Affairs office before each semester](#), ensuring that course expectations and credit hour requirements are met. [The recent implementation of a syllabus management platform, Simple Syllabus](#), has further improved the quality and consistency of course syllabi and streamlined the collection and review process.

Program quality, currency, and rigor are also upheld through a [structured program review process](#). Despite challenges due to leadership turnover within the Office of Academic Affairs between 2019-2021, Naropa has developed a [standardized program review process](#). This process, led by the Office of Academic Affairs and a faculty-led program review committee, assesses each certificate and degree program's curriculum quality, student and faculty outcomes, financial sustainability, and internal and external demand. Non-accredited programs undergo review every three years, while accredited programs follow their specific accreditation cycles. The [comprehensive reviews](#) cover various aspects, including program learning outcomes, curriculum coherence, regular curriculum and pedagogical review, alignment with the university's mission and strategic priorities, and the integration of contemplative education. [Review findings](#) are used to develop [action plans](#) for continuous improvement, ensuring alignment with institutional goals (See 4A).

3A-2

Naropa University clearly defines and differentiates learning goals for all degree and certificate programs, with [progressively rigorous student learning outcomes tailored to each course and degree level](#). Faculty set these outcomes to [with reference to Bloom's taxonomy](#), and to ensure alignment with the [university's mission](#) and [educational philosophy](#).

At the undergraduate level, the curriculum is anchored by [six core learning outcomes](#), forming the foundation of the general education program. [Major programs build on this foundation](#), progressing through [milestone](#) and [capstone](#) levels that require higher-order thinking. Learning outcomes for each undergraduate program and the core curriculum are clearly defined and [publicly available on the university's website](#).

Graduate programs emphasize advanced, specialized knowledge and professional competencies. For instance, [undergraduate psychology courses introduce basic concepts](#), while [graduate Clinical Mental Health Counseling courses delve into advanced therapeutic techniques](#) and clinical practice. Similar differentiation of goals is evident in the learning outcomes of undergraduate and graduate programs in Psychology, [Religious Studies and Divinity](#), and [Yoga Studies](#). The requirements for [research projects](#), master's theses, and [program-specific internships or practicums](#) ensure that graduate students acquire advanced knowledge and professional competencies relevant to their disciplines.

Naropa's structured progression supports cumulative learning, challenging students to apply knowledge in increasingly complex ways. [Faculty regularly review](#) and update learning outcomes to maintain their relevance and rigor, preparing students for academic and professional success.

3A-3

Since 2014, Naropa University has successfully offered distance education and currently serves over 400 students enrolled in online or low-residency programs, [spanning four online undergraduate programs and five low-residency graduate degree programs](#). All academic programs at the university adhere to the [same academic standards](#) and faculty governance, [regardless of delivery mode](#). Any changes in the delivery method of a program must go through the [curriculum change process](#) to ensure consistent quality across all formats. Learning outcomes are consistent across delivery modes, and multiple quality control mechanisms are in place to ensure the effectiveness of distance and low-residency programs. For example, [programs offered in multiple formats](#), such as the Psychology BA, Masters of Divinity, and MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs, [have identical course and program-level learning outcomes](#). Course syllabi are reviewed every term by department Chairs to ensure consistency in learning outcomes between residential and online/low-residency sections.

Program assessment and review further ensure quality and consistency across delivery modes. Faculty assess residential and low-residency/online programs separately to ensure consistent achievement of learning outcomes. [Program review metrics](#), including retention and completion

rates and course and program-level enrollment rates, include data for both residential and low-residency/online programs. (see 4A)

Naropa University also emphasizes instructional design principles in developing courses for online, asynchronous delivery through an instructional design framework established under the Title III grant "Leveraging Educational Technology for Student Success. [The Office of Educational Technologies](#) and the Innovative Teaching Lab, created through this grant, [offers comprehensive support to faculty](#) in [course development](#). Faculty developing courses under the Online BA programs, a focus of the grant, collaborate with an assigned instructional designer throughout the process. Faculty responsibilities include creating an [five to eight-module course plan](#), generating online content, [and developing assignments](#) and [assessment rubrics](#). This structured approach ensures that courses align with best practices in [instructional design](#) and meet the needs of students in the online, [asynchronous modality](#). This approach's success is reflected in the high levels of student satisfaction reported in course surveys and [feedback](#) from the Online BA programs. Based on this positive [feedback](#), Naropa plans to extend this support model to graduate programs beyond the Title III grant.

Regular use of data from [student surveys](#) and course evaluations informs improvements in student support resources and instructional practices. Student requests for more faculty engagement in online classes, for example, led to more [outreach and support for online instructors](#). A process for reviewing Online BA courses every two years for quality assurance and currency has been initiated and will continue. This review will include the Associate Dean for Online Programs, department Chairs and the Office of Educational Technologies staff.

The Online Council also plays a vital role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of Naropa's online and low-residency programs. This [faculty committee](#), which includes members of the Office of Educational Technologies team, supports online faculty and low-residency/online degrees, assists the Office of Academic Affairs in developing online programs, and facilitates discussions on the vision and practice of online education at Naropa. [The council develops and refines academic policies](#) tailored to the online medium, ensuring effective integration of instructional design and contemplative pedagogy. It provides essential data and recommendations for program development and redevelopment, ensuring faculty oversight and involvement in decision-making.

Online program quality is further assured through [regular interaction](#) between faculty and students in online courses. [Interaction in Canvas can be monitored using diagnostic tools](#) that measure the volume and quality of communication. [Required interactions, such as participation](#) in threaded discussions, are integrated into assignments and evaluated by faculty. Faculty provide [detailed rubrics](#) for evaluating participation in discussions, which constitute a significant portion of the final grade in Naropa University online courses.

Naropa University demonstrates compliance with Core Component 3A through a commitment to maintaining rigorous, current, and appropriate academic programs across all degree levels and delivery modes. The institution ensures consistent learning outcomes and program quality through systematic processes, including [curriculum review](#), [faculty development](#), and [program assessment](#). By differentiating learning goals for [undergraduate, graduate, and certificate](#)

[programs](#), and by employing robust [online](#) and [low-residency education standards](#), Naropa upholds its educational mission and prepares students for success in their academic and professional endeavors.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

Naropa University offers a dynamic educational experience that engages students in gathering, analyzing, and communicating information, mastering intellectual inquiry or creative work, and developing skills adaptable to changing environments. The general education program is carefully crafted to align with the institution's mission and educational offerings at all degree levels, providing clear learning outcomes and a comprehensive educational framework. This program imparts broad knowledge and fosters essential skills and attitudes that the institution believes are vital for every college-educated person, preparing students to navigate and contribute meaningfully to a multicultural world.

3B-1

PLEASE NOTE:

Naropa is closely following the fast-moving policy pronouncements by the US Department of Education, both those which may be enforceable and those which may require congressional or judicial action. As the enforceable policies become clearer, we will take such actions as needed to remain in compliance and remain as a participating Title IV institution. Naropa will take all possible steps to ensure any modifications keep us closely aligned with our Mission, Vision and Values.

Naropa University's general education program is meticulously designed to align with its mission, educational offerings, and degree levels, providing students with a holistic and transformative educational experience. The purpose, content, and intended learning outcomes for the [core curriculum](#) are clearly articulated on the university's website, academic catalog, and internal website (SharePoint). The undergraduate [core curriculum encompasses six key areas](#): [contemplative inquiry and practice](#); [social justice and anti-racism](#); sustainability and ecological regeneration; [artistic expression and creative practice](#); [leadership and service](#); and [research and communication](#). These areas are structured to equip students with the inner resources needed to engage courageously with a complex and challenging world, transform it with skill and compassion, and attain deeper levels of happiness and meaning in their lives.

In contemplative inquiry and practice courses, students engage body, mind, and heart to cultivate insight and wisdom, learning to navigate complexity and uncertainty with openness and curiosity. Social justice and anti-racism courses address power dynamics and collective liberation, fostering critical thinking and communication skills. [Sustainability courses emphasize ecological justice](#) and regenerative living, encouraging students to address environmental crises and build life-sustaining communities. Artistic expression courses explore creative practices as vehicles for inquiry and transformation, while leadership and service courses provide opportunities to practice leadership skills and contribute meaningfully to society. Research and communication courses deepen students' writing and research skills, preparing them for capstone projects and scholarly work.

Through this comprehensive approach, Naropa's general education program not only supports students' academic growth but also their personal and [professional development, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet and improve the world](#). This alignment with the university's mission and strategic priorities underscores Naropa's commitment to fostering academic excellence, personal growth, and social responsibility in its graduates.

3B-2

Naropa University's core curriculum is deeply rooted in the institution's philosophy of [contemplative education, a framework that integrates academic rigor with mindfulness, compassion, and social responsibility](#). This curriculum is designed to impart broad knowledge and essential concepts while developing the skills and attitudes that Naropa believes every college-educated person should possess.

At the heart of Naropa's educational philosophy is the belief that true learning involves the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. The core curriculum reflects this by offering courses that encourage students to engage deeply with their inner lives and the world around them. [Contemplative inquiry and practice courses](#), for instance, invite students to cultivate insight, openness, and wisdom, fostering a lifelong commitment to personal growth and self-awareness. These courses provide historical and cultural contexts, honoring diverse experiences and emphasizing inclusivity across traditions.

In addition to fostering self-awareness, Naropa's core curriculum emphasizes social responsibility and ethical engagement. [Social justice and antiracism courses](#) challenge students to critically examine power dynamics, privilege, and oppression, equipping them with the tools to engage constructively with complex societal issues. These courses emphasize critical thinking and communication skills, preparing students to be thoughtful and active participants in their communities.

Naropa's commitment to sustainability and ecological regeneration is another cornerstone of its core curriculum. Students learn to live in harmony with the environment, integrating principles of sustainability into all aspects of their lives. These courses foster critical thinking and practical skills necessary to address global environmental challenges and build flourishing, sustainable communities.

[Artistic expression and creative practice courses](#) encourage students to explore their creativity as a means of inquiry and communication. These courses emphasize the transformative power of art, helping students to develop their imagination, conduct embodied research, and engage in meaningful self-expression.

[Leadership and service courses](#) provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills and a sense of civic responsibility. By exploring various forms of leadership and practicing service, students learn to leverage their unique talents to make a positive impact locally and globally.

Finally, research and communication courses deepen students' abilities to synthesize information, conduct thorough research, and articulate their ideas clearly. These courses prepare students for advanced academic work and professional success, ensuring they possess the scholarly and practical skills necessary for lifelong learning.

Through this comprehensive core curriculum, Naropa University ensures that its graduates are not only well-versed in broad knowledge and essential concepts but also possess the skills and attitudes necessary to navigate and contribute meaningfully to an ever-changing world. This grounding in Naropa's contemplative educational philosophy underscores the institution's commitment to fostering well-rounded, compassionate, and capable individuals.

3B-3

Naropa University recognizes and honors human and cultural diversity, as reflected in its mission statement and educational offerings. The university's commitment to diversity is integrated into the undergraduate core curriculum, which emphasizes social justice, service, and ecological sustainability. [Social justice and antiracism courses](#) challenge students to critically examine power dynamics, privilege, and oppression, equipping them with the tools to engage constructively with complex societal issues. These courses emphasize critical thinking and communication skills, preparing students to be thoughtful and active participants in their communities.

The curriculum also highlights the importance of ecological sustainability, with courses that teach students to [live in harmony with the environment](#). These courses integrate principles of sustainability into all aspects of students' lives, fostering critical thinking and practical skills necessary to address global environmental challenges and build flourishing, sustainable communities.

Graduate programs at Naropa require courses focused on diversity and inclusivity, preparing students to work ethically across diverse communities. This cultural competence is crucial for professionals who aim to navigate and contribute meaningfully to an increasingly interconnected world. Course level and program level learning objectives in Naropa's graduate programs also address diversity and inclusivity. Graduate counseling programs all [require a 3-credit course on diversity and inclusivity as it pertains to counseling skills](#). Required courses focusing on diversity exist in the Master of Divinity and MA Religious Studies programs, focusing on issues of power, privilege, and diversity and religious pluralism. Graduate students are encouraged to apply their learning and engage in real-world challenges and to work ethically and effectively across diverse communities through a wide range of internships. Naropa's assessment of the recent US Department of Education [Dear Colleague letter](#) and other pronouncements is that these courses remain viable and important but in the fast changing environment some modifications may become necessary.

3B-4

Naropa University fosters a vibrant culture of scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge through the active engagement of both faculty and students. [Faculty members contribute significantly to their fields](#), producing a substantial body of work that includes [books, articles](#), exhibits, presentations, and performances. These scholarly and creative activities are evaluated through the [faculty promotion process](#), ensuring high standards of professional recognition and mastery.

Students at Naropa are equally immersed in scholarly and creative pursuits, with many programs requiring them to produce original works and research studies. The [Capstone Festival](#) serves as a strategic initiative and a culminating experience for undergraduate students, showcasing their mastery in scholarly and creative work. This festival not only highlights students' ability to synthesize and present their work but also provides real-world skills development and a platform for public engagement. Students present their thesis research, senior projects, and creative works to an audience that includes faculty, peers, alumni, and community leaders, demonstrating the competencies and qualities cultivated during their Naropa education.

Naropa's curriculum includes undergraduate methods courses and graduate-level pre-professional internships and thesis courses, providing students with hands-on experience in research and creative work. [Faculty-led contemplative psychology and neuroscience laboratories](#) offer additional opportunities for students to engage in original research, collect data, and communicate their findings. Through these initiatives, Naropa University ensures that its faculty and students contribute meaningfully to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge, embodying the institution's mission and values in their academic and professional endeavors.

Naropa University meets Core Component 3.B by offering a comprehensive and thoughtfully designed general education program that aligns with its mission and educational philosophy. The curriculum emphasizes broad knowledge, critical thinking, and adaptability, fostering students' personal and professional growth. It integrates contemplative education principles, social justice, sustainability, and cultural diversity, preparing students to navigate and contribute meaningfully to a multicultural world. Faculty and students actively engage in scholarship and creative work, reflecting the institution's commitment to academic excellence, inclusivity, and lifelong learning.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

Naropa University guarantees the effectiveness and high quality of its academic programs and student services through a dedicated and qualified faculty and staff. Both [Graduate School of Counseling](#) and [Naropa College & Graduate Collective](#) faculty must meet Naropa's credentialing standards. The institution's commitment to diversity is reflected in its hiring practices, aligning with its mission and the diverse needs of its community. Naropa ensures that its faculty members are well-equipped to manage both instructional and non-instructional roles, such as overseeing curriculum, assessing student performance, and establishing academic credentials. All instructors, including those involved in contractual offerings, are appropriately qualified and subject to [regular evaluations](#).

Professional development is a priority, with resources and support provided to keep faculty and staff current in their disciplines and effective in their roles. Faculty members are accessible to students, and the support staff are well-trained and continuously developed. This comprehensive approach underscores Naropa's commitment to delivering high-quality educational programs and services, ensuring that both faculty and staff are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of the student body.

Naropa University is committed to hiring diverse faculty and staff, emphasizing diversity in all job searches and including [diversity related minimum qualifications](#) on our job descriptions . While there have been some [successes](#), challenges persist in increasing and maintaining diversity among faculty and staff due to location and salary constraints.

Naropa is closely following the fast-moving policy pronouncements by the US Department of Education, both those which may be enforceable and those which may require congressional or judicial action. As the enforceable policies become clearer, we will take such actions as needed to remain in compliance and remain as a participating Title IV institution. Naropa will take all possible steps to ensure any modifications keep us closely aligned with our Mission, Vision and Values.

To address these challenges, Naropa implements various diversity trainings and encourages inclusive pedagogical practices through the Office of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC). [MCIC](#) plays a crucial role in promoting diversity and inclusion on campus through comprehensive [trainings](#), restorative and JEDI-informed practices. (See criterion 1) These efforts contribute significantly to Naropa's mission of fostering a diverse, inclusive, and socially conscious educational environment.

Faculty are also encouraged to adopt inclusive pedagogical practices and create an [inclusive](#) climate in their classrooms. Our ongoing efforts to diversify faculty and staff demonstrate our commitment to building an inclusive and supportive academic community.

3C-2

Naropa maintains an overall [student-to-faculty ratio](#) of 9:1, with a 7:1 ratio for in-person students and a 6:1 ratio for online and low-residency students, enhancing our ability to meet student needs in the classroom as well as advising and one-on-one meetings outside the classroom. Over the past two academic years, an average of [66% of course credits](#) have been taught by full-time faculty members. The [average class size](#) at the university during this period is 12, with undergraduate classes [averaging 11 students](#) and graduate classes [averaging 12](#). With such small class sizes and most courses taught by full-time faculty, students benefit from a high level of individual attention. This is in line with the most recent IPEDS data stating that private liberal arts colleges have an average ratio of 10:1

All core faculty have non-teaching responsibilities clearly outlined in [faculty contracts](#) and in [annual review](#) and [promotion criteria](#), including but not limited to program assessment, student advising, and participation in faculty governance and community service. Faculty are supported by School Deans, Program Chairs, and Academic Affairs in fulfilling these duties. The faculty committee structure and program review workflow ensure active involvement in maintaining academic quality and addressing student needs (See 3.A).

Faculty are integral to the [hiring process for new faculty](#), participating in search committees and determining qualifications and selections, as outlined in our hiring policies.

3C-3

In compliance with HLC's revised Criteria for Assumed Practice for Faculty Credentialing, Naropa University has established credentialing policies for [Graduate School of Counseling](#) and [Naropa College & Graduate Collective](#) faculty. An [audit](#) of faculty credentialing for the 2024-2025 academic year shows that 30 of 44 Core and 20 of 52 Instructor faculty have terminal degrees in their disciplines. Before hiring, an unofficial transcript of the highest degree is required, and the Office of Academic Affairs maintains updated curriculum vitae and transcripts for all Core faculty.

The Core Faculty [search procedures](#) are designed to select highly qualified, [diverse candidates](#). The Office of Academic Affairs oversees a three-part process, first requiring a [Request to Hire](#) identifying the search committee and minimum qualifications for the position in accordance with credentialing policy, a [screening matrix](#) used to consistently and transparently evaluate applicants and select those to interview, and a [permission to hire](#) giving the search committees recommendations based, with similar procedures for hiring instructors and adjunct faculty. [Program faculty review applications](#) and credentials to ensure compliance with HLC and Naropa standards.

3C-4

Naropa University has an established [annual review process](#) for Core Faculty; however, the consistency and integrity of this process is a significant area of improvement identified in our self-study. The review process previously in place involved multiple levels of review (peer review, chair review, and dean review). In response, the Office of Academic Affairs and Faculty Affairs Committee are working collaboratively to create a more streamlined review form which will be launched in May 2025. The [process](#) is designed to support goal setting and professional development and promote transparency, equity and accountability around fulfillment of non-teaching duties. Program Chairs are responsible for mentoring and evaluating Adjunct Faculty with data from course evaluations serving as a key metric (see below). Faculty evaluation is also built into our [promotion process and criteria](#).

Student course evaluations are collected electronically each semester through the learning management system (Canvas). [Course evaluations](#) include questions on the effectiveness of faculty and results are shared with the faculty, program chair, dean, and Chief Academic Officer. Faculty are required to review and receive feedback on student course evaluations with their Program Chair annually and to reflect upon and address areas of concern during the annual review process. Adjunct faculty are also reviewed regularly through course evaluations and results are used as basis for future employment. Student [responses to course evaluations](#) demonstrate a high level of satisfaction for courses across residential, online, and low-residency delivery methods.

3C-5

Despite recent financial constraints, Naropa University demonstrates support for faculty professional development through a variety of in-house initiatives and dedicated resources. The university offers numerous professional development opportunities that align with its mission and values, ensuring that faculty are well-equipped to support and engage students in meaningful

ways. The [Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education](#) provides support for faculty in contemplative pedagogy through in-person and online offerings and trainings. The Division of [Mission, Culture, & Inclusive Community](#) offers training and support services for faculty in creating an inclusive classroom environment, responding to conflict and harm in the classroom, and creating a more diverse and inclusive curriculum.

Support for online teaching is continuously developing at Naropa, facilitated by the [Office of Educational Technologies](#) and the Innovative Teaching Lab. The office provides resources, training, and support for faculty to develop and deliver high-quality online and hybrid courses. This includes guidance on instructional design, best practices for online engagement, and the use of technology to enhance learning. The office ensures that faculty are well-prepared to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of online education, maintaining high standards of teaching and learning regardless of the delivery format.

Beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year a faculty-led proposal to [grant credit release or stipend for scholarly, creative, or community work](#) was accepted. In the first year of this initiative 9 faculty were awarded university support for their projects which can be reviewed [here](#).

Furthermore, Naropa encourages faculty to engage in ongoing professional development through participation in external conferences, workshops, and courses. Although the university aspires to support these endeavors by providing annual faculty development grants to help faculty stay current with developments in their fields and bring new knowledge and practices back to the campus community, continuity of this funding due to budget constraints has been identified as an area for improvement through our self-study process. Development funding was made available to faculty in starting with the 2023-2024 Academic Year after four years of unavailability.

Faculty development grant priorities include presentations at professional conferences, leadership in national organizations, creative and scholarly work leading to publication or performance, or advanced training leading to certification or degrees. In 2023-2024, 25 core faculty members applied for development funding for a [variety of professional development activities](#) including attending trainings in trauma informed teaching and best practices in online education, attending professional conferences and presenting papers and creative work at professional conferences, and conducting research for academic or creative projects. The funding has again been made available in 2024-2025 with 13 faculty members submitting requests thus far for funding for [various developmental activities](#).

Core Faculty members have the opportunity to take [sabbatical leave](#) to devote their attention to current developments in their disciplines, renew and refresh their education, training, and contemplative practice, and pursue creative and scholarly activities. Since the 2021-2022 academic year 18 faculty members have used their sabbatical eligibility. A few examples of sabbatical activities occurring during the 2024-2025 academic year can be found [here](#).

Naropa University emphasizes the vital role of faculty in mentoring students, which includes setting educational and career goals and coordinating with the Office of Student Success, the [Writing Center](#), and Academic Support services. Faculty expectations are clearly [outlined in the handbook](#) and [individual contracts](#), with Core Faculty required to hold a minimum of 5 office hours per week, full-time instructors 2.5 hours, and adjunct faculty 1 hour per week per course. These office hours are posted in [course syllabi](#) to ensure students know when they can receive individual assistance.

Recent improvements at Naropa have enhanced communication and collaboration between program faculty and academic advisors to support student retention. This includes regular [town hall meetings](#) to discuss student and faculty concerns. These efforts have contributed to increased [retention rates](#): undergraduate rates rose from 59% in Fall 2020-Fall 2021 to 64% in Fall 2023-Fall 2024, and graduate rates increased from 73% to 85% over the same period.

3C-7

Naropa University provides a variety of student support services aimed at helping students achieve success both in and out of the classroom. Our student support staff are highly qualified and receive consistent, ongoing [professional development](#) through both on-campus and off-campus opportunities. This commitment ensures that they maintain their level of expertise and continue to provide the highest quality of service to our students.

Hiring and Qualifications

The hiring process at Naropa ensures that all professional staff are properly qualified for their roles. Job descriptions for positions such as the [Registrar](#), [Academic Advising](#), Career Services, Financial Aid, and Counseling services clearly outline the required education and skills appropriate to each role. For example, advisors are required to hold Bachelor's degrees, with a preference for Master's degrees in fields such as Counseling and Education. Notably, all current advisors hold Master's degrees, reflecting their advanced qualifications and dedication to their profession.

Professional Development

Naropa's commitment to ongoing professional development is a cornerstone of our student support services. All staff are required to complete training on [Title IX](#) and [Diversity and Inclusion](#) through Canvas courses created by the Office of Mission and Inclusive Community (MCIC), including [JEDI 100](#) and 200. This foundational training ensures that our staff are well-versed in justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion principles. Additionally, student support staff regularly attend conferences, [summits](#), and other events to support professional development.

Student Advising

Advisors at Naropa participate in extensive professional development, including semi-annual retreats that cover crucial topics like [suicide prevention](#), trauma-informed advising, and strengths-based team-building. These retreats ensure that advisors are equipped with the latest

knowledge and skills to support students effectively. Additionally, a comprehensive [Advisor Training Canvas](#) course provides resources and best practices for high-level student support and is regularly updated to ensure its relevance and efficacy. Advisors also undergo Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) training, including participation in Consciousness Café workshops. Some advisors serve as JEDI Ambassadors, leading workshops and promoting JEDI initiatives on campus.

Academic Coaching

Naropa employs peer-to-peer tutoring programs through [Academic Coaching](#) and the [Writing Center](#). Academic Coaches and writing center assistants receive similar training and participate in regular team meetings and annual training sessions focused on student academic support. This structure ensures that academic coaches are well-prepared to assist their peers in achieving academic success.

Student Financial Services

The staff in [Student Financial Services](#) are dedicated to assisting students with [financial aid, personal financial management, and post-graduation loan repayment planning](#). Their qualifications and ongoing training enable them to provide [tailored financial guidance](#) and support to students.

Student Housing and Residential Life

The staff in Student Housing and Residential Life are committed to creating a healthy and supportive living environment for students. They undergo [regular training in areas such as community building, crisis intervention, and student wellness, ensuring they are equipped to support students living on and off-campus.](#)

Career Counseling

The Office of Career and Life Development assists students in [academic and career planning, internship and job search strategies, and preparation for graduate school](#). Career counselors are qualified professionals who receive ongoing training to stay current with industry trends and best practices in career development.

Office of Accessibility Resources

The Office of Accessibility Resources coordinates the university's efforts to provide [full access to educational, cultural, and other programs](#) sponsored by the university for qualified students with disabilities. [Staff in this office are trained in ADA compliance and best practices](#) for supporting students with disabilities, ensuring that all students have the resources they need to succeed.

Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community

Naropa University's Office of Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community (MCIC) staff are highly qualified, typically holding advanced degrees in fields like social justice or counseling. They undergo [continuous professional development](#) through on-campus and off-campus training, workshops, and conferences focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). MCIC staff are skilled in non-violent communication, restorative justice, and trauma-informed practices, and participate in JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) programs to effectively support and advance Naropa's mission of radical inclusivity and social justice.

Registrar

The Registrar's Office maintains the permanent academic records of all students and is responsible for [course registration, classroom scheduling, transcripts, transfer credit, verification of enrollment, issuing diplomas, and producing the course schedule](#). The staff in this office are [highly qualified](#) and regularly participate in professional development to ensure they are up to date with the latest in academic record-keeping and student services.

In summary, Naropa University effectively meets Core Component 3.C by ensuring that its faculty and staff are well-qualified, diverse, and supported in their professional development. The institution maintains a robust faculty-student ratio, provides comprehensive academic advising, and supports continuous improvement through regular evaluations and professional growth opportunities. Naropa's commitment to diversity and inclusion, coupled with its focus on high-quality programs and student services, underscores its dedication to fostering an effective and supportive educational environment.

Sources

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

Naropa University is dedicated to providing comprehensive support for student learning and effective teaching ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#), [Ex 4](#), [Ex 5](#), [Ex 6](#), [Ex 7](#)). The institution offers a range of student support services tailored to diverse needs, including traditional and nontraditional undergraduates, transfer students, and graduate students. These services include academic advising, learning support, and preparatory instruction. The university ensures that students are guided to courses and programs for which they are well-prepared, and provides the necessary infrastructure and resources to support effective teaching and learning.

3D-1

Naropa University provides comprehensive student support services tailored to meet the diverse needs of its student populations, including traditional and nontraditional undergraduates, transfer students, and graduate students. The [Office of Student Success](#) offers a wide array of support services, including advising and career counseling, accessibility and disability services, counseling and wellness services, and dedicated student support team for students of concern (the Consultation, Accountability, Resources, and Education (CARE) team). Additionally, Naropa offers affordable student health insurance and financial aid counseling through the [Office of Financial Aid](#). Other academic support services include academic coaching, the [Naropa Writing Center](#), the [Allen Ginsberg Library](#), and the [Institutional Review Board](#).

The [Office of Career and Life Development](#) assists students in academic and career planning, internship and job search strategies, and preparation for graduate school among other areas. The [Office of Mission, Culture and Inclusive Community](#) (MCIC) promotes social justice, offering educational opportunities, community-building events, and support groups. Naropa emphasizes

contemplative practices, providing meditation instruction focused on mindfulness, awareness and compassion training and opportunities for any community member. Other essential services include the [International Student Advisor](#), who assists with visas, legal documents, and connecting international students to support groups, [Title IX office](#), and [Campus Safety Office](#).

Additional student support services at Naropa include the [Registrar's Office](#) for academic records and course registration, the [Office of Campus & Residential Life](#) fosters engaged and supportive communities both on and off campus by providing housing assistance, residential support, and facilitating student organizations and campus-wide programming, and sustainable transportation through initiatives like the Bike Shack, free RTD (the regional bus service including airport transport) passes, B-Cycle (bike rental) stations, carshare spots, and parking permits to foster environmental stewardship.. Regular reviews through targeted surveys and the annual Student Satisfaction Survey ensure these services continually evolve to meet the student body's needs effectively. This holistic approach underscores Naropa's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Naropa University has also established a wealth of online resources to support its growing online student population. These services include a comprehensive [orientation program](#) with in-person, online, and hybrid options. The CARE team provides support accessible to all students, regardless of their residential status, with conduct meetings offered via Zoom and flexible scheduling to accommodate different time zones. Campus Life personnel assist online students in interacting with the campus community, accessing resources for basic needs, and encouraging local civic engagement. Title IX support ensures prompt follow-up on reports, while counseling and wellness services offer online workshops, individual counseling (for Colorado residents), and referrals for out-of-state students.

[The Office of Accessibility Resources](#) assists students in obtaining ADA accommodations for remote learning, and admissions and advising support online students in transitioning to and successfully completing their educational journeys at Naropa. International students receive comprehensive advising and support through the International Student and Scholar Services office. Online academic coaching sessions offer free, personalized, skill-based academic coaching in a safe and inclusive environment.

Naropa University has introduced [Bodhi Cheetah](#), an AI-powered chatbot, to enhance student support services. Bodhi provides 24/7 on-demand assistance, addressing questions related to academics, financial matters, student life, and mental and physical health. This tool connects students to necessary resources and proactively engages with them weekly to ensure continuous support. Students can opt-out anytime but still have access to Bodhi's assistance, ensuring flexibility in how they receive support. By integrating Bodhi, Naropa reinforces its commitment to student success and retention, addressing concerns promptly and effectively.

Naropa University demonstrates its commitment to addressing students' academic needs and ensuring proper course placement through a comprehensive and professional approach to learning support and preparatory instruction.

At the initial stage, Naropa's Admissions Counselors conduct thorough consultations with prospective students to identify any areas requiring additional support or guidance. This proactive approach ensures that students are directed to programs and courses that align with their academic readiness.

Upon enrollment, both undergraduate and graduate students benefit from highly individualized academic advising. This tailored service matches students with suitable courses, instructors, and support resources. Although remedial coursework is not offered, the advising staff provide personalized recommendations and referrals to resources such as the [Academic Coaching Program](#) (ACP) and the [Writing Center](#), addressing specific student needs.

The Academic Coaching Program offers personalized support in study skills and time management, delivered by experienced graduate students. The ACP provides flexible support options, including Zoom and email consultations, as well as weekend and after-hours sessions, effectively extending its reach to students in low-residency programs including those in a variety of time zones who don't need to schedule around mountain time.

[The Naropa Writing Center](#) complements these efforts by fostering a collaborative and interactive environment for writers across the university community. The center focuses on developing analytic thinking and writing skills, empowering students to enhance their writing proficiency through hands-on sessions and constructive feedback.

Additionally, the course [COR-110: Writing: Thinking and Being](#) offers substantial learning support by meeting students at their current level of writing proficiency. Conducted in a workshop format, the course emphasizes first-person inquiry and iterative drafting, guiding students through writing experiments and critical thinking exercises. This approach ensures that students refine their writing skills and academic preparedness.

Collectively, these initiatives reflect Naropa University's robust commitment to providing targeted support and preparatory instruction, thereby facilitating students' readiness and success in their academic pursuits.

3D-3

Naropa University has adopted a [professional academic advising model](#) in order to ensure a robust and tailored advising experience to honor the uniqueness of each student. All students are assigned an Academic Advisor who is responsible for guiding students through their academic journey from early access registration to new student orientation, and persistence to graduation. Advisors assist students in navigating academic policies and procedures, tracking degree requirements, and supporting students in reviewing their course schedules each semester. Advisors also monitor students' academic performance and intervene to offer support and resources when needed. Students must meet with their Academic Advisor each semester to go

over plans for the upcoming semester and to track progress toward degree completion before being given registration clearance.

Faculty also serve in a supportive capacity to advisors and students, which may include clarifying course content, substitutions, timing of department offerings, and helping students to identify research and professional directives.

3D-4

Naropa University's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning is evident through its extensive range of resources and support services. The university has meticulously developed a comprehensive framework to ensure both students and instructors have access to the tools and support necessary for academic and personal success.

At the heart of this framework is [MyNaropa](#), the university's internal website that provides a central hub for students, staff, and faculty to find information and access student support and academics support services. Students can access the Colleague platform through this portal, which gives access to course registration, tracking academic progress, and managing academic records, allowing students to efficiently navigate their educational journey.

For students with disabilities, the Office of Accessibility Resources plays a crucial role. It provides essential accommodations, such as note-taking and ASL interpreters, and offers faculty training to ensure that all educational materials and environments are accessible. By maintaining an updated [Accessibility SharePoint](#), the office delivers valuable tools and guidance, promoting an inclusive learning environment.

The [Office of Information Technology](#) enhances the technological infrastructure across the university. By improving internet access in residence halls and upgrading classroom technologies, Naropa ensures that students and faculty have reliable access to essential technological resources. The availability of [computer labs and printing facilities](#) further supports this goal.

Naropa's specialized [laboratories](#), such as the [William D. Jones Community Greenhouse](#) and the Consciousness Laboratory, provide hands-on learning opportunities in environmental studies and contemplative psychological science. These labs offer both unique research opportunities and professional development for students in the context of Naropa's contemplative and experiential curricula.

The [library resources](#) at Naropa, including the Allen Ginsberg Library and the Nalanda Arts and Therapy Library, are integral to supporting academic programs. With a vast collection of print and digital materials, including 36,000 volumes, 47,000 academic journal subscriptions, and 281,000 electronic books, the libraries offer extensive research support. Collaborations with CU Boulder and access to digitized archival materials further enrich the research resources available to students.

Research databases accessible through Naropa's libraries, including over 32,000 academic journal titles and numerous databases such as JSTOR and PsychInfo, provide comprehensive support for research activities. The partnership with [CU Boulder's Norlin Research Library](#) further enhances access to additional resources.

Meditation halls across campuses underscore Naropa's commitment to a contemplative learning environment. These spaces support individual and group meditation practices, enhancing mental well-being and academic performance. Specialized practice spaces based upon a form of Somatic Buddhist psychology training using an integration of physical postures and meditative techniques, known as Maitri practice are utilized for contemplative exercises in specific programs, reinforcing the university's focus on holistic education. Maitri is a Sanskrit word meaning Loving Kindness.

For students pursuing arts disciplines, Naropa provides various [art and performance spaces](#). The Performing Arts Center and practice spaces for music, visual arts, and theater support creative expression and skill development, reflecting the university's dedication to fostering artistic growth. There is a recording studio for use by the students in the performance and creative process classes.

The [Office of Career & Life Development](#) plays a pivotal role in connecting students with practical experience through internships and clinical placements. By maintaining a dynamic database of partnerships and continually creating new opportunities, this office supports students in gaining professional experience and building career networks.

Instructors benefit from the support of the [Office of Educational Technologies](#), which aids in course development and the effective use of educational technologies. The integration of Canvas as the learning management system (LMS) facilitates flexible course design, real-time feedback, and performance tracking. The office's efforts to integrate various educational technologies ensure a cohesive learning experience.

Lastly, the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) at Naropa ensures that research involving human subjects adheres to regulatory standards. The IRB provides a wealth of resources through the MyNaropa portal, including training, quizzes, and detailed study examples, supporting both students and faculty in conducting ethical and compliant research.

In summary, Naropa University's comprehensive resources and support services create a robust environment that enhances both teaching and learning. By providing a well-rounded infrastructure, from advanced technological tools to dedicated research support, Naropa ensures that students and faculty are well-equipped to succeed academically and personally.

Sources

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- Computer Labs and Printing Fac
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- Student Union of Naropa
- Title IX Office
- William D. Jones Community Greenhouse

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Summary Strengths:

1. Naropa University's curriculum is aligned with the institution's mission and integrates its contemplative approach with a commitment to academic excellence.
2. Academic programs offer clear pathways for students to achieve their educational and career goals.
3. Naropa University supports faculty development through ongoing professional growth opportunities, provides clear guidelines for faculty responsibilities, and emphasizes the importance of effective teaching practices.
4. Naropa University provides extensive academic advising and student support services tailored to the diverse needs of its student body. This includes personalized advising, access to academic resources, and support for both traditional and non-traditional students.
5. Naropa University offers a wide range of resources to support effective teaching and learning that include technological infrastructure, specialized libraries, performance spaces, and clinical practice sites.

Future Considerations:

1. Further the ensuring of consistent evidence and thorough documentation of the program review process.
2. Further the development and implementation of distinct assessment procedures and reporting of results for online and residential programs.
3. Further the standardization and consistency of faculty annual reviews to ensure effective evaluations.
4. Further the implementation of a comprehensive faculty orientation program that includes contemplative pedagogy, and an overview of institutional support services.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4A-1

Naropa University has established a sustainable process for assuring regular [review of its academic programs](#). Naropa University recognized the need for a more consistent and robust program review process during its internal self-study. Before 2023, the university struggled with inconsistent review procedures and a lack of documented improvement actions, largely due to frequent turnover in the Academic Affairs leadership, and institutional disruption during the Covid-19 Pandemic. In spite of these difficulties, program review was conducted with some programs, leading to curricular changes, and the launch of new degree programs between 2020-

2023. For example, following review and [recommendations](#) from an external consultant, the BA Environmental Studies department revised their curriculum and launched an online version of the degree. The [BA Art Therapy Program](#) was identified as a potential area of growth leading to the successful development and launch of an online degree program in Fall of 2023. The BA Creative Writing & Literature program also modified their curriculum to reduce pre-requisites, and encourage enrollment from students outside of the major in addition to [developing new courses](#): Queer Literature; Indigenous Literature; Literature and Psychedelics; and revising the course on Diaspora, Migration, and Borderlands in response to declining enrollment numbers.

After identifying program review as an area of significant concern, Naropa University developed a new, sustainable [program review process](#) in collaboration with faculty. The goal was to establish a consistent framework, reduce administrative workload, and provide agile, targeted support for program revitalization and development. Central to this new approach is the [Program Optimization Working Group \(POW\)](#), a faculty-driven committee that serves as an internal review panel. This systematic process ensures that every certificate and degree program is thoroughly evaluated in terms of learning outcomes, curriculum, and alignment with the university's mission. The review process includes a rotation schedule for non-accredited programs, which are assessed every three to five years, while accredited programs adhere to their specific accreditation cycles. POW is responsible for overseeing the review process, providing feedback, and ensuring that recommendations are followed up on. By the end of the succeeding academic year, programs must complete an [action plan](#) identifying three improvement goals related to student success, enrollment, curricular and pedagogical improvements, or operational efficiency to focus on until the next comprehensive review. Programs will report on progress towards identified goals annually, and submit a final follow-up as part of the next comprehensive review.

To streamline the review, programs are required to submit a [program review response form](#) that addresses the quality of outcomes, curriculum relevance, and alignment with the university's mission and strategic priorities. A [program review rubric](#) ensures consistency and clarity in evaluative criteria. Additionally, POW employs a condensed set of key performance indicators (KPIs) to annually assess all degree programs and identify those needing further attention outside the regular review cycle.

This structured and collaborative approach emphasizes continuous improvement to maintain academic quality and relevance. One of the system's strengths is its integration with strategic decision-making, enhancing consistency, communication, and transparency regarding program health and viability. POW reports are distributed annually to the campus community and are used in Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Council meetings to inform decisions on program funding and continuation. The [Annual Report from POW](#) includes targeted recommendations for program guidance. Additionally, the Office of Academic Affairs has introduced a [Program Data Dashboard](#), which provides accessible data on enrollment, graduation, retention, and other KPIs used in decision-making processes.

The new process has already shown positive results: starting with Fall 2023 and proceeding through Fall 2025, all Naropa College and Graduate Collective programs will have successfully undergone a full initial review with the Program Optimization Working Group (POW), and

following these initial review each of the program will develop [Program Action Plan](#) detailing specific actions, and interventions for each program, particularly those facing enrollment or efficiency challenges. This collaborative effort will lead to action plans designed to ensure sustainable, marketable, and efficient curricula aligned with the university's mission. Naropa is also making strides in specific program areas outside of this process. For instance, the Graduate School of Counseling has developed a [robust review and assessment plan](#) in accord with CACREP standards that will be implemented for the MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree in 2024-2025, demonstrating a commitment to meeting industry standards.

While progress has been made, Naropa acknowledges areas for improvement, such as enhancing the consistency and documentation of acting on review findings and better integrating assessment, program review, and budgeting processes. To address these issues, Academic Affairs plans to implement meetings involving program faculty, enrollment staff, budget managers, and the Chief Academic Officer to set enrollment targets and discuss budget allocations. Additionally, annual program review questions will be integrated into annual learning outcome [assessment reports](#) and [budget planning tools](#), linking goals and budget requests to program review and assessment data.

Looking ahead, Naropa University is focused on enhancing well-performing programs while holding underperforming ones accountable. The institution is prepared to make difficult decisions, including suspending or canceling programs that no longer meet market needs, as we did in 2020 when Naropa decided to discontinue a slate of underperforming [BA/MA/MFA programs](#). This balanced approach underscores Naropa's commitment to maintaining high-quality, relevant educational offerings while ensuring institutional sustainability. Through these efforts, Naropa University is fostering a culture of continuous improvement, data-informed decision-making, and strategic alignment, all aimed at providing the highest quality education to its students. The institution's journey toward consistency excellence is ongoing, with a clear focus on adapting to market needs, maintaining academic rigor in ways that are aligned with its mission and values.

4A-2

Naropa University has established policies and procedures for evaluating all credits that it transcripts. Faculty members are integral to this process, playing a key role in assessing course equivalencies, [proposals, and revisions](#) to ensure that courses meet the institution's academic standards. Any new or revised courses must undergo evaluation by the Office of Academic Affairs, the relevant curriculum committee, and the school dean before being presented for faculty approval (See 3.C.1). Curriculum committees utilize [review and approval checklists](#) to ensure consistency and rigor in the approval of individual courses and course changes. Additionally, Naropa has developed [substantive interaction guidelines](#) to assist faculty in course development for both residential and asynchronous online modalities, ensuring that the time and rigor are appropriate to the number of credits awarded in accordance with the university's [credit hour policy](#). Naropa currently only awards credit for [prior learning](#) in the case of the [Where There Be Dragons](#) study abroad program.

The university also accepts credits from non-traditional sources, including the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), DSST/DANTES exams, and military transcripts, up to a combined maximum of 30 semester credits. Naropa's [transfer policy provides clear guidelines](#) for applying these credits towards major and minor requirements, as well as residency requirements, ensuring that all transferred credits meet the institution's rigorous academic standards. Students are notified of these policies during the admissions process while working with their admissions counselors and the Office of the Registrar.

To ensure transparency and consistency, Naropa has published [policies on credit evaluations](#) that are accessible to both students and staff. These policies, along with detailed documentation of the evaluation process and student advising support, help students understand how their credits are assessed and applied.

[Articulation agreements](#) with other institutions must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate faculty curriculum committee, school dean, and faculty senate to ensure that credits awarded meet the same rigorous standards. For example, in May 2024, the Naropa College and Graduate Collective Curriculum Committee (NCGCCC) and [Cauldron \(Faculty Senate\)](#) [reviewed](#) proposals and syllabi for entering into agreements with non-accredited institutions.

4A-3

Naropa University maintains clear and transparent [policies to ensure the quality of accepted transfer](#) credits for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Transfer credits must originate from regionally accredited institutions, institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, or those recommended for transfer credit by reputable third-party evaluation services such as the American Council on Education (ACE) or the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). Each academic department has established [guidelines and course equivalencies](#) to ensure high standards and consistency in credit acceptance.

Upon acceptance to Naropa University, [the Registrar's Office prepares](#) a [transcript evaluation](#) that documents all transferable credits and their application toward core and program requirements. New students review this evaluation with their academic advisor, and any requested changes must be made during their first semester. Credit decisions are made by the Office of the Registrar, with coursework graded "C-" or above accepted for undergraduate credits and "B" or above for graduate credits.

4A-4

Naropa University adopts a comprehensive approach to maintaining and exercising authority over all aspects affecting the quality of its educational offerings, with a central role played by the faculty. At the core of Naropa's quality assurance strategy are its rigorous standards for [faculty qualifications](#). The university ensures that [all faculty members](#), whether regular or adjunct, meet the credentialing requirements outlined in the faculty credentialing policy (See 3.C.3). To foster continuous improvement, faculty performance undergoes regular reviews through annual faculty evaluation reports (See 3.C.4). [Promotion criteria](#) detail the expectations for Naropa faculty,

including teaching experience, quality, personal and contemplative development, socially transformative teaching methods, university service, and professional development in research and creative work.

Faculty are primarily responsible for curriculum oversight and development. [Curriculum and assessment committees](#), comprised of faculty from various programs and disciplines, oversee course prerequisites, academic standards, and student learning expectations. Any proposed changes to the curriculum or new degree programs must be reviewed and approved by the relevant faculty committee(s) according to the level of change (See 3.A). Proposals to enter contractual agreements or articulation agreements must also be approved in this way to ensure academic quality, rigor, and consistency with Naropa's Mission, Vision, and Values.

For instance, when proposing a new course, faculty must [submit a course proposal and a completed syllabus](#). The proposal form requires faculty to justify the need for the course, provide data supporting this need (such as assessment data and student evaluations), and explain how the new course's learning outcomes align with program outcomes, including any prerequisites. [Program revision proposals](#) must address the rationale and impact of the proposed changes on learning outcomes, curriculum structure, faculty workloads and budgeting, effectiveness, quality, and required resources or facilities.

The Office of Academic Affairs provides clear [guidelines](#) on proposal requirements to ensure rigor and transparency. Instructions for developing proposals and the decision-making process are available on the [Curriculum Change page](#) of the Office of Academic Affairs. The university's online proposal submission system (Smartsheets) ensures that all necessary questions are answered and appropriate documentation is provided.

Decisions regarding modifications to course offerings, prerequisites, degree requirements, program learning outcomes, assessment, and resource needs are made by program chairs in consultation with core faculty during department meetings. All Naropa courses and programs have explicitly stated learning outcomes, which are required to be included on [course syllabi](#) along with criteria for evaluating student performance. The [syllabus management system](#) (Simple Syllabus) ensures that all required information is included and accessible to students before classes commence (See Criteria 3.A). Faculty utilize a range of direct and indirect measures to assess whether program outcomes are being achieved (See Criteria 4B).

Naropa University supports effective teaching and learning through a variety of resources, including a learning management system for online and residential courses, [campus libraries](#) with tailored collections, meditation halls, Maitri Space Awareness rooms, art and performance spaces, smart classrooms, and a growing [database of internship sites](#). Additionally, Naropa offers highly individualized advising, an academic coaching program, a writing center, and an [AI Chatbot](#) for immediate student support in navigating university resources (See Criteria 3D).

To ensure course rigor and student learning expectations, Naropa conducts regular assessments of student learning and collects student feedback. Annual assessments are performed by program or department faculty through Annual Assessment Reports and assessment meetings, with oversight by the curriculum and [assessment committee](#) (See 4.B). Students can also provide

feedback on course quality and teaching effectiveness via course surveys. The aggregated results are reviewed by faculty, department chairs, and deans. Additional targeted surveys, such as the [Online BA Survey](#), offer students further opportunities to provide feedback on specific programs or resources.

Currently, Naropa does not offer dual-credit programs.

4A-5

Naropa University upholds specialized accreditations that align with its programs and educational mission. The MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) with a Transpersonal Art-Based Counseling concentration is [accredited](#) by the American Art Therapy Association. Similarly, the MA CMHC with a Dance/Movement Therapy concentration is accredited by the [American Dance Therapy Association](#). The university is actively evolving the MA CMHC toward the goal of applying for accreditation for the from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). This goal aims to enhance career opportunities for graduates by increasing the number of states where the Naropa curriculum leads to licensure, as well as ensure adherence to high quality standards, and promote ongoing program improvement. (In the future Naropa may opt to prioritize CACREP accreditation for the MA CMHC program over maintaining individual concentration accreditations, as CACREP offers greater benefits for licensure and career advancement).

In Fall 2023, Naropa's Center for Contemplative Chaplaincy achieved [official accreditation](#) from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the national credentialing body for chaplaincy education. Naropa's Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program is distinguished by its focus on contemplative chaplaincy, offering both residential and online Master of Divinity (MDiv) options. This accreditation, valid for six years, allows Naropa to develop Continuing Professional Development offerings and potentially expand into Extended Campus programs, enhancing its mission-aligned and career-oriented offerings.

4A-6

Naropa University collects survey data to assess the success of its graduates and ensure that its credentials effectively support advanced study and employment opportunities. Every two years, the university conducts a [Student Satisfaction Survey](#), gathering [valuable insights](#) into faculty performance, curriculum effectiveness, overall student satisfaction, and career preparedness. This survey can also be analyzed for a subset of graduating seniors.

Additionally, a [first destination Post-Graduation Survey](#) is distributed to new alumni six months after graduation, providing key insights into their post-graduation outcomes. [The findings from these surveys](#) are shared with Marketing, Academic Affairs, Alumni Relations, and Career & Life Development to enhance understanding of student experiences and outcomes.

Naropa graduates apply their unique educational experiences to their communities through [diverse careers](#). They work as professors, chaplains, small business owners, authors, teachers, psychotherapists, life coaches, farm managers, writing center directors, registered nurse case

managers, marketing directors, sales associates, and more. Many graduates go on to establish businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations. While [undergraduate alumni](#) often pursue careers outside their field of study, [graduate alumni](#) overwhelmingly build their professional paths based on their area of specialization.

Naropa University graduates make a significant impact in the field of mental health. According to seven years of recent IPEDS data on MA in Counseling Psychology degrees awarded in Colorado, [Naropa granted the highest percentage](#) of these degrees relative to its total graduate enrollment. Additionally, among all institutions in the state offering MA in Counseling degrees during this period, Naropa was, [on average, the second-largest producer](#), regardless of school size.

To address the complexities within the issues of tracking alumni outcomes, Naropa plans to implement more regular alumni surveys, and explore methods to improve response rates. The University has re-instituted the position of [Director of Alumnx Relations](#), and recently launched a search in order to strengthen out reach and feedback to and from Alumni. First Destination Survey data, and Student Satisfaction Survey data, and Alumni survey data, will be made available on a [central dashboard](#) and updated regularly on the Office of Institutional Research website. Data on enrollment, leaves of absence, retention, student outcomes, and other success markers similarly will be distributed and evaluated annually with program chairs as part of the annual assessment reports.

Naropa University demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs in several ways. The institution has established a systematic program review process led by the Program [Optimization Working Group \(POW\)](#). Naropa ensures the quality of its credit evaluations through rigorous [procedures for accepting transfer credits](#) and maintaining [transparency in credit policies](#). The university maintains authority over curriculum standards, course prerequisites, and faculty qualifications, with regular oversight by [curriculum and assessment committees](#). [Specialized accreditations](#) are upheld for relevant programs, and the institution evaluates graduate success through various surveys and licensure data. Despite challenges in survey administration, Naropa is committed to improving data reliability and integrating this information into strategic decision-making processes to continually enhance program quality.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

Naropa University has made significant strides in aligning with the Higher Learning Commission's Core Component 4.B, demonstrating a strong commitment to the continuous assessment of student learning and the enhancement of educational outcomes. In recent years, the institution has implemented a comprehensive assessment framework that spans all levels of academic programming.

4B-1

Central to Naropa's [assessment strategy](#) is the integration of learning outcomes at both the course and program levels. Each syllabus clearly defines Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and [Program Learning Outcomes \(PLOs\)](#), creating a structured foundation for assessment. This approach extends across graduate degree programs, undergraduate majors, core curriculum, and certificate programs, with articulated PLOs prominently displayed on the [university's website](#), course catalog, and in [new program proposals](#).

Assessment is a core responsibility of faculty members. Annual assessment activities are standard practice; departments and programs, including the undergraduate core, are required to submit [assessment plans](#) and reports each year. Since the 2022-2023 academic year, this integration has fostered heightened faculty engagement, creating a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. Assessment reports include: a follow-up on action identified in the previous year; an analysis of how assessment results from the current year will be used to inform decision making on the curriculum, student artifacts (e.g., papers, exams, performances); and associated rubrics. Academic Affairs support staff and Deans oversee assessment coordination, ensuring regular assessments and effective use of results. [The Curriculum and Assessment Committees](#) support assessment at Naropa within the context of shared governance, Naropa University continues a faculty-driven assessment process, which we see as appropriate and optimal for our small size and our teaching intensive mission-oriented culture.

Programs have developed varied approaches to [assessment](#), including [different assignments](#), rubrics, and deliberation methods. The [curriculum and assessment committees](#) share best

practices, promoting cross-program learning. This collaboration has bolstered faculty confidence and investment in assessment. To streamline the process, Naropa has introduced [digital forms](#) and an [assessment archive](#), improving access to past reports and action items. Over the past three years, several programs have utilized assessment data to refine their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). For instance, the BA Yoga Studies program responded to feedback from students, the Center for Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community, and Academic Affairs by developing a new [PLO](#) centered on diversity and inclusion: "Yoga & Globalization: Students are able to speak to the pertinent socio-cultural issues related to the globalization of yoga." This change reflects a thoughtful analysis of assessment results, and demonstrates how Naropa "closes the loop" on assessment to address gaps, and to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of its academic offerings.

As the Graduate School of Counseling moves toward equivalency to and eventually applying for accreditation with the 2024 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards, there have been multiple adjustments to the fieldwork components of the counseling students' requirements. As part of the standards related to individual student assessment, Naropa has incorporated [Supervision Assist](#), which is a tracking and communication system used to log students' internship hours and experiences as well as house supervision contracts, liability insurance statements, and other important items related to fieldwork in [practicum](#) and [internship](#). This system can also be used to track professional disposition concerns, clinical skill development concerns, or academic issues related to their progress in the Graduate School of Counseling (GSC) which are gathered longitudinally throughout the students' progression through their GSC program. CACREP requires that students receive an average of 1 ½ hours of university supervision per [week] for internship students; Naropa increased their requirement to 2 hours weekly to meet this standard while accounting for student or instructor absence in the event of emergency. Additionally, these university supervision groups may not exceed a 1:12 ratio, so advisors carefully monitor the enrollment needs of internship students. This revision to the [fieldwork component](#) of the shows institutional attention to the interplay between assessment, curriculum design, and accreditation.

Programs with specialized accreditation may follow different processes for annual assessment and reporting, aligned with their accrediting bodies' requirements. For instance, two concentrations within the MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) program submit annual reports to their accrediting bodies. The Somatic Counseling programs submits an [annual report](#) to the American Dance Therapy Association; and the Transpersonal Contemplative Art-Based Counseling submits an annual report to the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Programs. Additionally, to prepare for CACREP accreditation, the MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling program has developed a [robust assessment plan](#) to be implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year that meets CACREP standards.

[The Office Educational Technologies](#) supports these (and other) efforts by assisting with instructional design and integrating outcomes and rubric tools within the LMS (Canvas). This support helps align course-level and program-level outcomes, facilitates the creation and use of standardized rubrics, and streamlines data collection and analysis. For example, the MA CMHC has incorporated all [outcomes and rubrics](#) for the new [CACREP assessment plan](#) into Canvas to manage data collection and analysis more efficiently.

Despite considerable progress, Naropa acknowledges areas for refinement and improvement. Inconsistencies in assessment processes (especially between 2018-2022 have been noted); these inconsistencies stem both from repeated leadership transitions within Academic Affairs, and the institutional disruptions caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Examination of these inconsistencies within administrative processes revealed the need for revision to the structure of Academic Affairs. Consequently in 2024, we revised the structure of Academic Affairs: previously one Dean supervised both the undergraduate Naropa College and the Graduate Collective (all graduate programs not housed within the Graduate School of Counseling, which is led by the Dean of the Graduate School of Counseling. In the new structure there is now a Dean dedicated to each division: [Naropa College](#) (undergraduate); the [Graduate Collective](#); and the [Graduate School of Counseling](#).

In order to evolve toward a more comprehensive assessment process, we've developed [feedback rubrics](#) to provide feedback to program faculty on their assessment reports. Beginning in early Fall 2025, the Naropa College and Graduate Collective Curriculum & Assessment Committee, or the Graduate School of Counseling Curriculum & Assessment Committee will review the 2024-2025 assessment reports (completed May 2025), and provide feedback to the programs that fall under their respective areas of governance. Recommendations and follow-up action items may include revisions and refinements of: curriculum; pedagogy; assessment plans; academic support services; faculty development; or facilities. Departments will then update progress on these items in subsequent annual reports, ensuring ongoing program evaluation and enhancement.

As of now Student Affairs assesses co-curricular learning outcomes only indirectly through attendance and student feedback; Naropa University aims to develop and formalize a co-curricular assessment processes, an area that has previously been underdeveloped.

Naropa University effectively uses assessment information to enhance student learning, aligning with the criteria set forth in 4.B.2. The institution integrates assessment results into its curriculum revision processes for courses, new course proposals, and program-level updates (See 3A). By embedding assessment results into its [curriculum](#) and program development processes, Naropa ensures that educational improvements are data-driven and responsive to the evolving needs of its students. This structured approach not only supports continuous improvement but also strengthens the alignment between learning outcomes and the institution's commitment to fostering an inclusive and dynamic educational environment.

4B-3

Naropa University's approach to assessing student learning exemplifies a thoughtful integration of widely accepted best practices and innovative, institution-specific methodologies, aligning well with criterion 4.B.3. This approach underscores substantial faculty involvement and the application of effective assessment tools.

The institution utilizes traditional assessment instruments such as [rubrics](#) and faculty committees, alongside unique practices that reflect Naropa's distinctive educational philosophy. For example, the [Warriors Exchange/Exam, capstone thesis projects](#), and similar qualitative assessment

methods aligned with Naropa's focus on Contemplative Education are used in course and program level assessment. As faculty become more experienced and confident in assessment, the institution anticipates further refinement of these specialized practices. Academic departments conduct annual assessments based on departmentally determined [Program Learning Outcomes](#) (PLOs) across their degree programs, with capstone or thesis courses commonly used to evaluate mastery of learning outcomes.

Naropa's assessment framework is deeply interwoven with its educational mission and values. Faculty support across-the-curriculum commitments to sustainability, diversity and inclusion, and the arts, which are reflected in the undergraduate [core curriculum's six area: contemplative inquiry and practice; social justice and anti-racism; sustainability and ecological regeneration; artistic expression and creative practice; leadership and service; and research and communication](#). This alignment ensures that assessment practices not only measure student learning but also reinforce the institution's core educational principles.

Faculty participation in assessment is integral to Naropa's approach, as it is embedded in the core responsibilities of teaching. Involvement with curriculum assessment and development is listed as an expected activity and [criterion for promotion](#) at all levels. Naropa has increasingly adopted a faculty-led and faculty-driven assessment process, which suits the institution's small size and mission-oriented culture. The annual assessment cycle, including fall submission of assessment plans and spring submission of assessment reports, is managed primarily by faculty; as noted earlier in order to "close the loop" of the assessment cycle, reports will undergo a subsequent review process involving deans, and faculty committees, ensuring thorough evaluation and feedback.

Naropa University meets Core Component 4.B through a comprehensive and innovative approach to assessment that integrates traditional practices with institution-specific methodologies. The university effectively uses rubrics, faculty committees, and unique tools such as the Warrior Exam to align assessments with its focus on Contemplative Education. Assessment results inform curriculum revisions and program improvements, reflecting Naropa's commitment to its educational values and mission. Faculty participation is central, with assessment responsibilities embedded in promotion criteria and annual reviews. This faculty-led approach, supported by a multi-tiered review process, ensures continuous enhancement of student learning and aligns with Naropa's core principles of sustainability, diversity, and artistic expression.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

Naropa University exemplifies a strong commitment to educational improvement by focusing on retention, persistence, and completion rates in alignment with its unique mission and student population. Through a combination of data-driven strategies, personalized attention, experiential learning, inclusive practices, financial support, and holistic development, Naropa creates an environment conducive to student success.

4C-1

Naropa University has focused on improving retention over the past several years. By prioritizing personalized attention, community engagement, financial accessibility, and holistic development, Naropa creates an environment that fosters student success and persistence. [This strategy](#), while ambitious, is well-suited to the university's unique mission and student population. A current [strategic priority](#) is to enhance enrollment and retention, with goals set for improvement across both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The success of this approach is reflected in improved retention rates. Between Fall 2020 and Fall 2024, [undergraduate retention increased by 5%](#), rising from 59% to 64%, with a peak of 68% during that period. [Graduate retention saw an even greater increase, growing by 12%](#) from 73% to 85%.

Retention among BIPOC students also improved significantly during this time. [Undergraduate BIPOC student retention rose by 15%](#), from 55% to 70%, while [graduate BIPOC student retention increased by 21%](#), from 69% to 90%.

Graduate program graduation rates remain strong, [typically ranging from 80% to 90%](#). While undergraduate six-year graduation rates [increased in the two previous years, they declined last year](#). The university is actively analyzing this trend to identify the contributing factors. Due to small sample sizes within each undergraduate programs, percentages can fluctuate significantly. These variations are closely monitored through annual program review data, ensuring programs can address challenges and continuously improve.

4C-2

Naropa University employs a data-centric methodology to systematically monitor these metrics across both undergraduate and graduate programs. The Office of Institutional Research provides [weekly updates on enrollment and persistence data](#) throughout the fall and spring semesters, ensuring that faculty and staff are consistently informed. [Comprehensive analyses of retention and completion data](#) are presented to the Board of Trustees at each meeting highlighting the institution's commitment to transparency and evidence-based decision-making. Additionally, retention and completion data are integral to the [annual review metrics](#) for the [Program Optimization Working Group](#) (POW) program review group and are incorporated into the comprehensive program review process. Furthermore, Naropa assesses the health of its academic programs using the [Program Health Dashboard](#), which analyzes retention and graduation rates, along with various other metrics. These practices underscores Naropa's dedication to continuous improvement in student success.

Acknowledging its diverse, non-traditional student population, [Naropa collects and analyzes data](#) on various student groups, including first-time full-time students, transfer students, online and low-residency students, and residential students. This approach ensures that the unique needs of different student demographics are considered.

Naropa University also utilizes surveys such as the [Student Satisfaction Survey](#), [Campus Climate Survey](#), and [Post-Graduation Survey](#) to gauge student satisfaction and identify factors influencing retention and completion. These surveys provide valuable insights into students' likelihood of continuing their studies and graduating from Naropa. Additionally, [surveys of students who withdraw or take leaves of absence](#) capture crucial information about the reasons behind these decisions, further informing Naropa's strategies for supporting student success.

4C-3

Naropa University's [contemplative education model](#) is designed to foster holistic student development, addressing academic, personal, and professional growth. This comprehensive approach to education enhances student engagement and commitment, key factors in retention and program completion. Naropa offers an exceptionally personalized educational environment. The institution [maintains a 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio](#) and an average class size of 12 in the undergraduate college, and an average class size of 11 across the graduate programs, facilitating intensive interaction between students, faculty, and professional support staff. This high-touch approach enables tailored support and guidance, critical factors in promoting student persistence and academic achievement.

Evidence of Naropa's commitment to providing high-touch support for students is found in its dedicated student support team for students of concern (CARE). The [CARE team](#) includes the Dean of Students, Director of Student Accountability and Advocacy, Senior Director of Advising, Senior Director of Counseling and Wellness, Director of Campus and Residential Life, Title IX Coordinator, and Director of Student Financial Services. The CARE team utilizes a [reporting form](#) allowing faculty and staff to refer students to the CARE team for academic or behavioral issues, or for concern of basic needs and community connection.

Upon receiving a CARE referral, the team reviews and prioritizes interventions based on urgency and appropriate response time. Using the [NaBITA Risk Rubric](#), they assess mental/emotional well-being concerns and potential threats. A case manager is assigned to coordinate interventions, provide resources, and follow up with involved parties. The team collaborates with various campus stakeholders, including the [Student Counseling Center](#), [Restorative Community](#), [Residential and Campus Life](#), and [Academic Advising](#), to provide comprehensive support. While maintaining confidentiality and [adhering to FERPA regulations](#), the CARE team's co-chairs have the authority to delegate resources quickly, ensuring timely and effective responses to student needs. This proactive approach helps identify and address potential issues early, contributing significantly to student retention and overall campus well-being.

Naropa University demonstrates a strong commitment to high-touch support for students through a range of targeted [initiatives](#). One aspect focuses on improving faculty awareness of support resources and classroom support. The office of student success has taken steps to provide more faculty support by attending regularly core faculty meetings to ensure they are well-informed about key student retention resources such as CARE reports, [Academic Coaching](#), and [various support services](#). Regular communication with faculty is emphasized, encouraging early submission of CARE reports for at-risk students and providing classroom management support through CARE team assistance and [restorative conversation training](#). Community gatherings are also held for online faculty to discuss best practices.

For students, Naropa has adopted a more hands-on approach to advising, increasing the presence of advisors and career development staff in classrooms. This includes identifying courses with the most first-time students and conducting classroom visits to introduce support services early in the student journey. The university has also implemented regular small-group meetings between students and advisors, such as "Lunch with Advisors" and "Tea Time" sessions. To enhance communication and engagement, Naropa creates newsletters featuring community events, important dates, and workshops, while also establishing student representation systems like Cohort

Representative/Academic Advisor Meetings (CRAM) for graduates and departmental student delegates for undergraduates. These initiatives collectively create a supportive environment that promotes student success and retention by ensuring students feel connected and supported throughout their academic experience.

Naropa developed an [Advisor Onboarding & Cross-Training Canvas](#) course to centralize policies and best practices for advising. This course promotes developmental, career outcomes, and retention-oriented advising while retaining inter-departmental knowledge among all advisors.

Additionally, the university implemented a Student-Advisor agreement for all undergraduate students to set clear expectations and guidelines within the advisor-student relationship.

To further support career readiness and retention, Naropa has implemented several experiential learning opportunities and career development activities. For instance, the university offers [entrepreneurial workshops](#) covering topics such as [starting a private practice](#), [marketing for counselors](#), grant writing, and [general social media marketing](#). These workshops equip students with practical skills for future career success. Additionally, Naropa hosts two [alumnx panels](#) annually, allowing students to connect with graduates and gain insights into various career paths. The university also facilitates immersive learning experiences, such as the Mental Health Partners Immersion Day, and has increased [classroom presence](#) from [Career and Life Development](#) (CLD) staff to weave career resources into the student experience early on. These initiatives ensure that students are continuously engaged with career development resources, thereby enhancing their motivation to persist and complete their degrees.

The [Capstone Festival](#) was initiated both as a retention initiative to engage the entire community in better understanding how a Naropa education teaches applied skills to engage the world, and to celebrate student scholarship. The idea was that students early in their Naropa journey who might not see clear career connections could have visible on-campus peer-to-peer demonstrations of learning outcomes and applied skills.

Naropa University has introduced [Bodhi Cheetah](#), an AI-powered chatbot, to enhance student support services. Bodhi provides 24/7 on-demand assistance, [addressing questions](#) related to academics, student life, mental and physical health, as well as financial matters. This tool connects students to necessary resources and proactively engages with them weekly to ensure continuous support. Students can opt-out anytime but still have access to Bodhi's assistance, ensuring flexibility in how they receive support. By integrating Bodhi, Naropa reinforces its commitment to student success and retention, addressing concerns promptly and effectively.

4C-4

Naropa University utilizes commonly accepted best practices for analyzing student retention, persistence, and completion rates. While Naropa does use IPEDS definitions for reviewing rates for traditional full-time, first-time students, Naropa's larger populations of incoming students are transfer and graduate students, so it also tracks those populations. [Naropa tracks retention, persistence, and graduation rates for a variety of cohorts](#), including incoming transfer students by class level (first-year, sophomore, junior), first-time, first-year students, race/ethnicity, housing status, and participation in LLC. Cohort information is captured at census date each fall, after the end of the add/drop period. One-year retention rates are captured at census the following fall. [Undergraduate graduation rates](#) are measured at a six year rate and [Graduate graduation and attrition rates](#) are captured until all students are no longer enrolled.

Transfer-out students and their subsequent enrollment is tracked through the National Student Clearinghouse, and [the data is used to identify peer institutions](#), providing valuable insights for future market research. In addition to these measures, which have been in place for over ten years, [retention has been analyzed](#) on a more granular level to assess the effectiveness of the

measures implemented with the Title III grant, which focused on first-year retention. Semester-to-semester [retention is monitored](#) for all undergraduate students and by program at the graduate level.

Naropa University meets Core Component 4.C by demonstrating a strong commitment to educational improvement through focused attention on [student retention, persistence, and completion rates](#). The university's low [student-to-faculty ratio](#) and personalized support mechanisms, including the CARE team, foster an environment conducive to student success. Naropa utilizes data-driven strategies, such as [weekly updates](#), [annual reviews](#), and student surveys (See 4C-2), to monitor and enhance retention and completion rates. Initiatives like [faculty training](#), [enhanced advising](#), [career development workshops](#), and [the Bodhi Cheetah AI chatbot](#) further support students. By [systematically analyzing and responding to retention data](#), Naropa ensures its practices effectively align with its mission and promote student success.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Summary Strengths:

1. Naropa University's Program Optimization Working Group (POW) provides a systematic and faculty-driven approach to program evaluation, providing alignment with the University's mission, program health, and student objectives and outcomes.
2. Naropa University has clear and rigorous policies for credit transfer, prior learning assessment, and articulation agreements. Faculty involvement in curriculum review and credit evaluation reinforces the institution's commitment to quality, and academic integrity.
3. Faculty led curriculum oversight ensures academic rigor and alignment with learning outcomes.
4. Learning outcomes are clearly embedded at both the course and program levels. Annual assessment reports analyzing these outcomes provide for teaching and learning accountability.
5. Naropa University has a comprehensive student support system that integrates academic advising, career services, and faculty mentoring.

Future Considerations:

1. Further the collection of data on program reviews, student learning outcomes, and alumni surveys.
2. Further the development of assessment consistency across departments, and the reporting of how the analyses of assessment data lead to program change.
3. Further the development and implementation of better tracking of alumni that includes employment and graduate school placement rates.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

Naropa University demonstrates a robust commitment to shared governance, actively involving its internal constituencies—governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in institutional planning and in the development of policies, and procedures. This inclusive approach fosters a collaborative environment essential for effective decision-making.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is structured and conducts itself so as to ensure engagement with other Naropa constituents. [The board includes a student trustee and a faculty trustee, each nominated by their constituent bodies](#). Both are voting board members, serve on board committees, and make reports at full board meetings ([Student Trustee | Faculty Trustee](#)). Key administrators also make reports at the full board meetings and participate in most of the board committees ([DESS](#), [MCIC](#), [Finance and Academic Affairs](#)).

The [BOT manual](#) outlines the Board's role in setting the university's overall direction, mission, and goals, while delegating daily operations to the President and administrative officers. The BOT meets regularly throughout the academic year for planning and policy setting. See section 2.C for additional information.

Faculty

The executive faculty decision-making body is the faculty senate (Cauldron), whose purview includes such areas as [academic policy and recommendations on institutional budget](#). Cauldron meets 3 times monthly from September through May for discussion and review of academic policies. [The President and Chief Academic Officer are non-voting members of Cauldron](#). Additionally, Academic Council, the gathering of all ranked faculty, meets monthly during the fall and spring semesters. It is a deliberative and voting body considering matters of academic policy, new degree proposals, resolutions to be presented to the President for consideration either by the President or the Board of Trustees. It also provides a forum for sharing information, such as student learning outcomes assessment results across programs, the use of new online processes at Naropa, current enrollment data, shared governance, and the budget. Academic Council is attended by the President and Chief Academic Officer. Both have standing agenda items at Academic Council for providing updates to the faculty and participating in a period of open discussion.

In 2023, for example, Cauldron commissioned a formal survey of faculty workload and morale ([HERI](#)). Cauldron also [advised](#) on [major CACREP accreditation efforts](#) for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. Cauldron has formal processes to elicit input and feedback and oversees all academic committees including the [Faculty Affairs](#) committee which is responsible for faculty promotion review and recommendation. [Additionally, Cauldron as the faculty senate is charged with the care of shared governance as principle within Naropa University](#). In response to the 2023 survey data that showed evidence of tension between faculty perspective and university administration, Cauldron developed a proposal to pilot Academic Council (the full faculty assembly) as a deliberative and decision-making body: the first proposal—an [adjustment to the faculty promotion system](#)—was just approved in the [February 2025 Academic Council](#). This is an important faculty-led structure to promote ongoing application of shared governance at Naropa.

In addition, the CFO, and Chief of Staff, in collaboration with the faculty, Cauldron held several Town Hall style meetings ([Faculty](#), [Staff](#), [Students](#)) in Spring 2024 with faculty and staff to explain the current state of the budget. These meetings were well received by the community and improved transparency and clarity around the budget ([September](#), [October](#), [November](#), [January](#), [February](#)).

Faculty have requested more involvement in the selection of executive leaders at the institution. Recently, President Charles Lief met with faculty at a session of Cauldron to discuss the [appointment of an interim Chief Academic Officer](#). Additionally, since the current President is planning to retire in the summer of 2025, a search is underway for a new president. In support of these efforts, [faculty are involved on the search committee for the new President](#) as well as represented on search committees for other [senior Academic or Administrative leaders](#).

Students

Naropa engages students in the process of developing policies and procedures of the university in the following ways: 1) the [Student Union of Naropa \(SUN\)](#), 2) [community gatherings](#), 3) the [student trustee to the board](#), and 4) student participation in university committees ([Presidential Search](#), [Campus Transition Committee](#)).

SUN includes an elected student trustee, who represents the needs of students on the board of trustees. In addition, SUN oversees campus events and programming as well as registered student organizations. [SUN is responsible for managing and administering the student activity fees budget for both events and student organization activities, assessing each budget request for alignment with the goals and mission of the university as well as the impact the request will have on the university community.](#)

Staff

Staff has a voice in Naropa governance through several avenues. One is the [Staff Executive Council](#) (SEC), which is comprised of elected staff [volunteers](#) representing each division. Although not itself a decision-making body, SEC provides a [structure for staff engagement](#) and input into university decision making. Members work to provide leadership amongst staff in relation to issues of particular concern to staff and to general community building. Members also work to keep staff informed of university matters ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#)).

President

The President meets with the following groups on a regular basis: Executive Leadership Council (Weekly); Cauldron (three times/month); Academic Council (monthly); the board chair (weekly); and the Board of Trustees Executive Committee, Finance and Sustainability Committee, and Development Committee (monthly). The President meets with the Staff Executive Council and SUN (the student government) at least once per semester, and more often as needed and/or requested. In 2022 the President established the office of Chief of Staff, currently filled by the Vice President of Mission, Culture and Inclusive Community in order to provide internal, cross divisional coordination and accountability so that the President who is the principal University fundraiser could enhance his external work with donor relations and public relations.

5A-2

The administration at Naropa University uses data analysis to guide key decisions, thereby ensuring that the institution remains responsive and adaptive to both current and future challenges. This commitment to data-driven governance is evident in several key practices.

One of the clearest examples of Naropa's data-driven decision-making is in its Office of Institutional Research (OIR). This department collects and analyzes crucial data on enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. By tracking metrics such as [1-year student retention rates and six-year graduation rates](#) across different student categories, Naropa's administration can identify trends and areas for improvement. The OIR also issues [weekly reports](#) tracking [enrollment](#) and admissions data. These reports provide real-time insights into the university's recruitment efforts and student demographics. This information allows them to make targeted interventions and allocate resources effectively to support student success.

Naropa's administration uses this data to address specific challenges, such as supporting transfer students. With [78%](#) of incoming undergraduate students being transfers, all student engagement

efforts consider the unique needs of this population. This data-informed strategy allows Naropa to position itself as a destination for [high-credit transfer students](#) and better tailor student [support services](#) to the needs of our unique student population.

The Board of Trustees (BOT) receives different groups presenting data from the various areas of the university ([BA](#), [DESS](#), [AA](#)). These reports will provide data on areas such as enrollment, finances, academic affairs, student, staff and faculty satisfaction. This approach ensures that board decisions are grounded in a thorough understanding of the university's current state and future prospects.

Student feedback is another crucial data source that Naropa leverages for decision-making. The Office of Institutional Research conducts regular [student surveys](#), providing valuable insights into student satisfaction, academic experiences, and campus life. Additionally, the [Campus Culture Survey](#) offers a deeper look into the university's cultural climate, helping administrators identify areas for improvement. OIR also [assesses findings from other surveys](#) such as those of the Council of Independent Colleges (“CIC”) and summarizes those for use by the leadership bodies.

In the realm of financial planning, Naropa University employs [enrollment projections](#) as a critical component of its budgeting practices, ensuring that financial planning aligns with anticipated student numbers and institutional needs. These projections are derived from a combination of historical enrollment data and current application trends. By forecasting the number of incoming students, the university can estimate tuition revenue, which is a significant portion of its income. This data-driven approach allows the university to make informed decisions that support its financial health and strategic goals.

Naropa also employs benchmark analysis for [tuition rate changes](#). This data-driven approach allows the university to balance the need for financial sustainability with the goal of maintaining affordability for students. By comparing Naropa's tuition rates with those of peer institutions and considering factors such as inflation and operational costs, the administration can make informed decisions that support the university's long-term viability while remaining competitive in the higher education market.

Data-informed decision making is also woven into Naropa's process for new program development and program review. The University uses financial analysis and enrollment projections to predict the financial impact of proposed programs, as well as other factors including but not limited to existing resources and support, projected student demand, projected employer demand for graduates of the program, impact on related programs, and fit within the university's mission and strategic priorities. This has been most recently evidenced by the engagement of the management consulting firm Mindstream, which is in the process of performing a comprehensive [organizational review](#). This review includes a program analysis to evaluate both existing programs and potential new programs. While the [academic program analysis](#) is not yet completed, the process and framework has been well established and will combine both qualitative and quantitative factors.

Prior to this more robust and comprehensive independent analysis, enrollment data, both external and internal, was instrumental in recent decisions to sunset programs and expand online course offerings. Detailed analysis of course enrollment trends and program enrollment, particularly the rapid growth of online degree programs, has also influenced departmental course offerings over the past two years. As our residential undergraduate population has decreased in proportion to our online undergraduate population, undergraduate departments have had to adapt in offering more courses online and less residentially. Additional changes to our academic program offerings in recent years include:

- Addition of online BA programs in [Psychology](#), and [Art Therapy](#).
- Addition of Low-residency programs in [MA CMHC](#), [MA Yoga Studies](#), and [MDIV](#)
- Elimination of low-enrolled programs and reduction in course offerings ([BA Music](#), [MA Religious Studies](#), [MA Resilient Leadership](#))

Naropa's commitment to data-informed decision-making is further exemplified by its adoption of modern technology solutions. The university has [implemented Ellucian's Colleague SAAS](#) cloud solution to create a unified technology framework. This system allows for better data integration across departments, providing administrators with a more comprehensive view of student progress and institutional performance.

5A-3

Structures for contribution and collaborative effort include academic committees, the process of developing and reviewing curriculum changes, policy changes, and workflow changes through faculty and staff committees.

All core faculty are expected to serve on an academic committee, overseen by Cauldron, the University's faculty senate. These committees may include students, adjunct faculty, and administrative representatives, as noted in the [Faculty Handbook](#). The committees are: Faculty Affairs committee (overseeing faculty workload, promotion, rank change processes, grievances involving faculty, and policy issues), Shared Governance and Faculty Handbook committee (discussed above in 5.A.1), Graduate Curriculum Committee (reviewing curricular change proposals on course and program levels for graduate programs), Naropa College Curriculum and Assessment Committee (overseeing and assessing the quality of undergraduate curriculum), Institutional Review Board (providing institutional oversight for the ethical conduct of research), Online Council (developing academic policies relating to specifics of the online delivery medium), Diversity and Inclusion Committee (supporting faculty in engaging with and implementing the university mission and values of diversity and inclusion, NB Naropa is closely monitoring the changing US DOE policies and directives in the area of diversity and will make such modifications as are deemed necessary by the BOT and our University counsel), Joanna Macy Center, Faculty Advisory Committee (implementing programming and conducting planning for the Joanna Macy Center for Resilience and Regeneration at Naropa), and the Steering Committee for the Center for Advancement of Contemplative Education (supporting the ongoing development and deepening of contemplative education at Naropa). Full descriptions of these committee structures are available in the Faculty Handbook.

Due to organizational and environmental changes through the years, the faculty handbook became out of date and in need of updating. Therefore, in the summer of 2024, a group of faculty were charged with the task of updating the handbook to its current [2024-2025 version](#). The handbook was [approved by Cauldron](#) after review by the [University's President](#) particularly to ensure conformance with the [Naropa Employee Handbook](#) which takes precedence in the event of a conflict that may not have been uncovered.

University Review

Faculty and staff involvement in academic affairs is evidenced by the University Review structure for curriculum and program approval. As described in the Faculty Handbook, "[involves a multi-step approval procedure including submissions of a preproposal \(for new programs or certificates\), development of a full new-program proposal or program change proposal, review by appropriate committees \(Academic Council, University Review, Curriculum Committee\), review and approval by Cauldron, and final approval by Chief Academic Officer, President, and Board of Trustees.](#)" This process ensures that faculty, administrative leaders, and staff are all attuned to proposed curricular changes, ranging from more substantive changes (e.g., creation of an entirely new degree program) to less substantive changes (e.g., revision of courses within an existing or approved degree program). This structure demonstrates collaborative consultation and decision-making across administrative and academic offices.

A recent example of our collaborative process was seen in the curricular overhaul of [Naropa's MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling](#) for the purpose of seeking CACREP accreditation. During AY 23/24, the faculty and academic deans of the Graduate School of Counseling engaged in a [transparent, involved process](#) to create new courses, rename existing courses, develop new program outcomes, and creation of Key Performance Indicators for program assessment. These efforts positioned the Graduate School for compliance with CACREP standards and the first steps of a self-study for accreditation. After developing the proposals, the faculty worked with the Senior Director of Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives, to work the proposals through the various steps of program and university review, involving staff, BOT, students, and administrative leaders. The changes were [approved](#) by the university and went go into effect in the Fall 2024.

Naropa University's commitment to shared governance through inclusive representation and data-driven decision-making underscores its dedication to fulfilling Core Component 5.A. While strengths in governance structures and decision-making processes are evident, opportunities exist to clarify shared governance practices, improve policy consistency, enhance communication, address turnover in key roles, and refine data utilization. By building on these strengths and addressing these areas, Naropa will further strengthen its governance framework, ensuring it continues to meet the diverse needs of its community and drive continuous improvement across the institution.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

Naropa University demonstrates a commitment to maintaining and strengthening its resource base to support educational offerings, as evidenced by its investment in operational staff, infrastructure, realistic goal-setting, robust budgeting processes, and fiscal allocations that prioritize academic programs.

5B-1

Naropa University places a high priority on hiring and retaining qualified staff. The hiring and evaluation process is designed to ensure that all staff members possess the necessary qualifications and credentials for their roles. Each job description ([Ex1](#), [Ex2](#), [Ex3](#)) includes minimum qualifications appropriate for the position, ensuring that only suitably qualified candidates are considered.

Human Resources (HR) plays a crucial role in maintaining this standard by working closely with supervisors and departments to create clear and cohesive job descriptions ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#)). Additionally, HR uses data from the Employers Council, IPEDS, and CUPA-HR data to ensure that job descriptions accurately reflect the responsibilities and requirements of each position and appropriate compensation ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#)). This helps to maintain appropriate compensation ranges, ensuring that Naropa remains competitive in attracting top talent.

Furthermore, Naropa University has dramatically improved operational efficiency, compliance and effectiveness by transitioning to a [Professional Employment Organization](#) for payroll and human resource management. This has become particularly important due to the expansion of the Naropa footprint across the United States which brings with it its own compliance challenges. Naropa University has introduced a new [Employee Development Review \(EDR\) process](#) to ensure that its operational staff remains highly trained and qualified. This comprehensive review system begins with an employee self-reflection phase, where staff members assess their own performance against key competencies identified by the university. Supervisors then review these self-assessments and provide their evaluations, fostering a

collaborative dialogue about performance, goals, and areas for improvement. The EDR process emphasizes continuous professional growth by setting specific developmental goals and offering targeted feedback. These structured reviews not only help in identifying and addressing skill gaps but also align individual performance with the university's broader mission and objectives. By implementing the EDR process, Naropa ensures that its staff remains competent, motivated, and aligned with the institution's values, thereby supporting the overall quality and effectiveness of its educational programs.

Professional Development Opportunities

Naropa University is committed to the ongoing professional and personal development of its staff. HR hosts a variety of training options, including mandatory institutional trainings such as employee [new hire onboarding](#) and [Title IX](#) training. Additionally, a wide array of personal and professional development sessions are offered, covering topics such as [career and money for practitioners](#), [mindful money](#) financial literacy training, and [budgeting training](#). Finally, departments can request discipline specific training/professional development budget in the annual budgeting process. The total training budget for the University for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is \$62,385. See sections 3.C for additional information about hiring and professional development related to instructional and student support staff.

Physical Resources

Naropa's physical infrastructure is sufficient and continually evolving to meet the needs of its students, faculty, and staff. Since the 2019 self-study, the university has leveraged its facilities to support institutional needs. A significant initiative in this regard is the campus consolidation plan, aligned with the [Create 2022 Strategic Plan](#). [This plan involved relocating academic programs from the Paramita campus to the Nalanda campus, which improved facilities and services for students while realizing operating cost savings of approximately \\$300,000 annually. The proceeds from the sale of the Paramita Campus building were used for capital improvements and debt reduction\(Page 26\).](#)

Over the coming 3-5 years the physical footprint will substantially change in response to a significant shift from almost exclusively in-person enrollments into increasingly well-received online and hybrid programs initially coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic but with ongoing strong market interest. The University's student housing facilities which house approximately 75-80 students are expected to be eliminated by fall of 2027, which will significantly reduce costs of these activities which lose more than \$600,000 a year annually. Students are increasingly interested in a variety of housing options that the current old style dormitory buildings don't offer and occupancy has dropped off accordingly. [.Most importantly, the University, following the review of several Letters of Interest, entered into a contract to sell the main campus referred to as 2130 Arapahoe Avenue for \\$24 million.](#)

While the precise timing of selling this [campus \(Campus Sale FAQ\)](#) is not yet known, it is expected to occur as soon as the spring of 2027. When the sale is closed, Naropa will then have up to two more years, rent free, to vacate the campus allowing for about 4 years from now for space planning. The buyer, as is the case in virtually all commercial purchases in Boulder, has a

series of options to extend the contract while it works through the land use and permitting processes. [A planning effort for the eventual departure from this campus is being led by the University's Chief of Staff, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Academic Officer and has been referred to as the Campus Transition Steering Committee.](#) Due to the elimination of these facilities over the coming years, extensive rehabilitation efforts are not a focus for these facilities although routine repairs and maintenance activities continue.

In support of these efforts, the University obtained a [facilities condition assessment](#) in the summer of 2024 to understand the current state of the facilities infrastructure along with the repairs needed for proper maintenance. Repairs performed since this assessment was performed have been targeted to address the most pressing need for campus repairs. With notable progress being made most specifically in the replacement of ADA ramps and other important accessibility infrastructure ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#)).

Technology Infrastructure

Naropa University has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing its educational and operational infrastructure through several key technological upgrades. During the fall of 2024, the University performed an [IT assessment](#) as part of a comprehensive organizational review performed by the management consulting firm Mindstream. This assessment indicated that the Information Technology function operating at Level 2 noted as “Managed.” While this indicates opportunities for improvement are needed, “to fully leverage advanced tools...” In support of improving IT systems and processes, management has established mission and vision statements for IT in alignment with the University's strategic plan. Additionally, goals were set for the [IT department](#) as a whole, and for the [AVP for IT individually](#) to achieve improvements in the IT function. [Tracking on these goals](#) has been completed throughout the year indicating positive progress although work remains to be done.

Examples of IT improvement projects completed over the last several years are as follows:

- The transition to the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) to improve the educational experience by offering a user-friendly interface and seamless integration with other educational tools, thereby facilitating a more interactive and accessible learning environment.
- The move to Doctums for technology managed services facilitates the effective use of its Colleague enterprise resource planning system and Ellucian advisory services to support its utilization of the Recruit customer relationship management system has improved the University's ability to use its key technology tools.
- Naropa's upgrade to cloud-based Microsoft solutions has improved collaboration and accessibility, allowing students, faculty, and staff to access important documents and applications from any device, thereby promoting flexibility and scalability.
- The adoption of Smartsheet has further streamlined project management and workflow automation, enhancing overall institutional efficiency.

These technological advancements collectively underscore Naropa University's dedication to creating a modern, efficient, and user-centric environment that supports its educational mission

and operational excellence. Given the large number of remote and hybrid employees, these tools have been critical to effective operation, and will continue to be important as the University transitions to a future with a reduced physical footprint post the [sale of the main campus](#).

Supported by this technological infrastructure, Naropa maintains a data governance [framework](#) through the [Office of Institutional Research](#) as supported by the Information Technology departments. This includes complying with the necessary [assessments](#) needed to comply with GLBA requirements.

5B-2

Naropa University's mission and related statements are realistic and achievable in light of its resources, organization, and opportunities. The heart of Naropa's mission is the integration of academic excellence and contemplative insight, a goal accomplished through the dedicated efforts of its faculty and the support of the [Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education](#) (CACE). CACE, internationally recognized for its pioneering work in contemplative pedagogy and compassion training, provides pragmatic tools that enhance the academic, contemplative, and experiential aspects of each course syllabus. This alignment with Naropa's mission is further supported by the university's strategic planning and governance structures.

The establishment of the [Executive Leadership Council \(ELC\)](#) in November 2021 marked a significant step in [Naropa's strategic planning process](#). The ELC conducted a comprehensive evaluation of past strategic initiatives and current factors keeping the university from achieving realistic goals. This analysis identified supportive and inhibitive factors affecting the university's objectives and led to the identification of five key priorities, known as the [BIG 5](#).

One of the key priorities is to establish Naropa as the leading institution in contemplative education. This priority includes initiatives such as [Contemplative 101](#) training for faculty and the creation of a [Contemplative Resource Hub](#), which are realistic given Naropa's existing expertise and resources in this field.

Another priority focuses on creating a sustainable enrollment and retention strategy. By partnering with [external consultants](#) for program research and market analysis, Naropa is addressing challenges such as limited brand recognition and the need for robust support for non-traditional students. Overall, Naropa University's [strategic plan](#) and its operational practices demonstrate that the institution's goals are realistic and achievable, given its organization, resources, and opportunities.

The university also emphasizes sustainability, another core value arising from its mission statement. The [ReGen Network](#) led by the Director of Mission, Culture, & Inclusive Community, is to guide, activate and support Naropa University in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the [Climate Action Plan](#), being responsive to emergent campus needs. This plan is currently being updated to reflect the current needs and priorities of the University.

Naropa's other achievements in line with its mission, vision, and values include significant increases in enrollment and retention, the establishment of a [Medicaid-licensed community counseling center](#) and the creation of an [Office of Educational Technologies](#) to support a growing portfolio of online and low-residency programs. These accomplishments reflect Naropa's ability to set and achieve realistic goals that align with its organizational structure and resources.

The University's budgeting process starts with the completion of a [Budget Planning Worksheet](#) that requires the department to:

1. Review the University's mission statement,
2. Review the departmental mission statement and ensure alignment with the University's mission statement,
3. Establish departmental objectives which align with strategic plan priorities, and
4. Quantify financial impacts for inclusion in the budget request.

This worksheet ensures that funding requests are aligned with the University's [strategic plan](#) and mission. Funding requests which are not in alignment with the strategic plan priorities and University mission would not be approved.

Overall, Naropa University's strategic plan, budgeting and operational practices demonstrate that the institution's goals are well-aligned with its mission and values. The university's comprehensive approach to strategic planning, supported by its governance structures and resource management, ensures that Naropa can maintain and strengthen the quality of its educational offerings in alignment with its mission.

5B-3

Budget Development Process:

Naropa University has developed transparent budgeting and financial monitoring processes for several years (2024, 2025). These processes provide transparency and encourage stakeholder discussions as the budget is developed through presentations to the Executive Leadership Counsel ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#)) and the [Cauldron faculty senate](#) at several stages of the process.

The budgeting process employs a combination of bottom up and top-down processes to ensure leadership level guidance with the detailed knowledge of departmental level leadership to ensure accuracy and strategic alignment. For example, the beginning of the [process](#) includes the discussion of high-level budget priorities considered important by the Executive Leadership Counsel for inclusion in the budget proposal in order to achieve strategic or operational objectives. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, these high-level budget priorities were articulated in a [town hall presentation](#):

1. Balanced budget
2. CACREP Accreditation

3.Implementation of Selected Mindstream Organizational Review Recommendations.

Additionally, budget request evaluation criteria were established as follows:

1. Aligned with University Mission (Must have)
2. Supports the big 5 strategic plan priorities (Must have)

--Should be at least 1 of the next 3--

3. Generates additional revenue
4. Improves efficiency/effectiveness
5. Improves stability, compliance or community experience

Each department's budget request is reviewed by the budget supervisor who is either the Dean or Vice President. They will ask questions, adjust requests, or ask for additional supporting documentation before submitting on to the Finance Office for aggregation and summarization. The high-level first draft of the budget will then be presented to the Executive Leadership Council and Cauldron for feedback and for transparency. This first draft budget will typically require some changes to achieve a bottom-line number that is acceptable for presentation to the Board. Therefore, a round of budget cuts are typically needed. This round of reductions are performed in consultation with the respective Vice Presidents and/or Deans until an acceptable budget is ready for submission to the Board. The Board will then approve the budget in the June meeting of the Board of Directors.

Beginning with the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the CFO developed a [multi-year budget planning model](#) which projects out the University's budget three years into the future. This model facilitates real time scenario planning to project out the long-term impacts of decisions made today. This model was utilized during the 2024-2025 budgeting process to demonstrate the high-level strategies that would be needed in order eliminate the structural budget deficit that has existed for years. The multi-year budget model outlines the difference between a status quo operation and the needed achievements to achieve a surplus budget by fiscal year 2028. It also illustrates the sufficiency of cash reserves with greater than \$21 million remaining from the [sale of the 2130 Arapahoe campus](#) as of the end of 2028.

Budget-to-Actual Monitoring Process:

The Finance Office provides periodic Budget-to-Actual reports ([6/30/2024](#) | [12/31/2024](#)) to the Board of Directors on at least a quarterly basis but even more frequently when the committee's meeting schedule permits. This report provides insight into notable positive and negative budget variances from the context of understanding the underlying business reasons behind the change. This consistent reporting mechanism builds confidence in the ability of the finance team to forecast financial results and to be able to provide insights into the drivers of budget variances.

In addition to the quarterly budget-to-actual reports provided to the Board of Directors, the finance team conducts quarterly budget-to-actual review meetings with each Vice President and Dean. These review sessions look at each departmental budget within the responsibility area of the specific individual in order to [identify questions for investigation and areas](#) of concern where an unfavorable budget variance might occur. This process enables the Dean or VP and the finance team to obtain early warnings sufficient to be able to change course in a certain area or to identify budget funding that could be reallocated to fund the overage. These regular discussions enable the finance team to develop a deeper understanding of the operational activities of the various departments to be better able to articulate business reasons for the associated financial results.

Finally, departments have real time access to budget-to-actual through the utilization of the self [service portal within MyNaropa](#). This enables budget managers to be able to review their budgets results on demand. This enables them to identify issues on their own and to take ownership for monitoring budget results. This combined with the quarterly budget-to-actual review meetings has begun to establish a culture of financial awareness and agency at the departmental level while also ensuring that the finance office can anticipate and address any surprises.

Budget Software

The budget office has been committed to fostering partnerships and transparency and interacting with stakeholders through group meetings, one-on-one sessions, training opportunities, Q&A sessions, and providing information when requested. The relationship between staff and faculty has been positive.

Naropa University recently improved its budget process with the implementation of [BudgetPak](#) beginning with the 2024-2025 budget development cycle. BudgetPak is a robust budgeting software tool that enhances transparency and allows budget holders visibility to monitor financial activities by program, department, and account. Some of the key functional data provided by BudgetPak include:

1. Headcount comparison reports
2. P&L reports for programs, department, and monthly reporting
3. Budget Status reports
4. Monthly variance reports

The implementation of BudgetPak included multiple weekly [group training sessions](#) with budget holders. Following the training, additional assistance was provided through individual meetings and Eight Q&A sessions. After the informational meeting and training sessions, the finance office prepared a survey to seek [feedback](#). Overall, 100% of the participants stated that BudgetPak streamlined the budget process, 100% found the tool easy to use, and 92% felt the training helped them understand the budget tool. Finally, a [budget training manual](#) is provided to walk through the process in a step-by-step manner.

In spite of these achievements, Naropa, like many small colleges, is currently operating under a budget deficit. As a small, private, non-profit institution with a small endowment, Naropa funds its annual operating budget almost exclusively on tuition revenue. Yearly fluctuations in enrollment can have a significant impact on financial performance. A coordinated strategy incorporating opportunities for enrollment growth and targeted budget reductions is essential for maintaining long-term sustainability and this strategy is currently being put into place. Budget projections as illustrated by the [Multi-Year Budget Planning Model](#) through 2028 indicate that Naropa's model is sustainable if the university is able to maintain an enrollment of 1000-1100 students and execute on specific cost reduction efforts as outlined within the scenario planning model. The university has sufficient financial resources to support a multi-year plan to reach these goals with ample reserves remaining to be used to bridge unanticipated changes from this modeled plan.

Naropa's CFI has generally been within the appropriate range, but has dipped in recent years with ratios calculated as follows for the last 3 years:

Fiscal Year Reported:	2023-2024	2022-2023	2021-2022
CFI Score	1.2	1.2	1.9

As indicated previously in this section and 5.C.5, Naropa is aggressively addressing its long-term financial sustainability by focusing on enrollment growth, pursuing additional revenue opportunities, and budget reductions. The most notable evidence of this work is the [organizational review engagement](#) with Mindstream. This engagement consists of a review of the entire organizational structure of the University for the purpose of proposing strategies for revenue enhancement and cost reduction/realignment. This work is planned for completion in June of 2025 although a number of interim reports ([IT](#)) are being provided to help facilitate decisions that are needing to be made during the spring semester.

5B-4

Naropa University's budgeting process and resource allocation processes are guided by the strategic plan and contemplative education mission. The Executive Leadership Council (ELC), plays a pivotal [role](#) in this alignment. The ELC is responsible for strategic decision-making and operational implementation, ensuring that financial and operational awareness is integrated into the university's fiscal sustainability efforts. This structure ensures that all financial decisions support the university's long-term vision and mission.

Naropa University demonstrates a strong commitment to its academic programs by [prioritizing funding for academic affairs](#) sufficient to meet the departmental goals and objectives. This is evidenced by the utilization of the budget planning worksheets prepared by department chairs ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#)) in the planning process. This prioritization is also evident in the allocation of resources to support instructional activities at the university. For example, the university allocated 49% percent of unrestricted income received for instructional expenses for fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. Advocacy for funding adjustments also underscores a dedication to maintaining educational quality and sustainability over time. As an additional example, the departmental budgets for the BA Psychology and the Graduate School of Counseling (GSC)

programs have increased in recent years to support the growth of programs in those departments. The budget growth in GSC has been invested in the MA CMHC program to pursue CACREP accreditation. This commitment ensures that the core educational mission of the university is not only maintained but also enhanced.

While Naropa has made significant strides in aligning its governance structures with its strategic goals, there is a recognized need for continued improvement in long-term planning outlook. This is being addressed through continued utilization of financial projection tools such as the [multi-year budget planning model](#) and the financial scenario planning tool which facilitate long-term planning at the leadership and board level. Strengthening these areas will further enhance the university's ability to achieve its educational purposes and adapt to future needs.

Naropa University is able to maintain and strengthen its resource base to support educational offerings through the monetization of real estate assets which have significantly appreciated since acquisition. This is most clearly notable with the impending [sale of the main campus](#) located at 2130 Arapahoe. Given the significant shift to online and hybrid programs coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic there is a significantly reduced need for physical real estate as an increased number of students, faculty and staff are virtual in nature. This has facilitated the ability to [liquidate this extremely valuable real estate](#) for \$24 million which will provide a greatly enhanced resource base for the institution. This resource base will be leveraged to invest strategically in the necessary areas needed to ensure Naropa is able to thrive in the coming years and not just survive. A [Campus Transition Committee](#) has been established to guide the move from the current main campus to new facilities or online working arrangements as appropriate. This will inform some of the decisions around the use of the funds to facilitate this transformation.

Additional investments in the resource base investment to support educational offers are evidenced by investment in qualified operational staff, robust infrastructure, and strategic financial management. The university prioritizes the hiring and development of competent staff through a rigorous evaluation process and continuous professional growth opportunities. Naropa's physical and technological infrastructure is continually upgraded to meet the evolving needs of its community, including significant initiatives like the campus consolidation plan and the adoption of systems like Canvas LMS and the [Colleague SAAS Enterprise Resource Planning system](#).

The University's financial statements ([2024](#), [2023](#), [2022](#)) illustrate sufficient assets available to support the operations over the last several years. Additionally, while recent year budget results generated deficit budgets, these deficits have been declining with the [current year showing a significantly reduced deficit funded by cash reserves](#), and a plan for complete extinguishment of the deficit by the time of the sale of the main campus ([2025](#) and [2024](#) Budgets).

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5C-1

Naropa University exemplifies a clear alignment between its resource allocation and its mission and strategic priorities. This alignment is evident through several key initiatives and processes that ensure financial decisions are made with the university's core objectives in mind.

One of Naropa's core strengths is the effective integration of its budgeting processes with its mission. The [budget planning worksheet](#) is a critical tool in this regard, linking budget requests directly to the University's mission and strategic priorities along with the department operational and learning objectives. This ensures that every financial decision supports the university's core objectives. The recent upgrade to [BudgetPak](#), as described in section 5.B.3, enhances this process by allowing the university to easily track budget allocations in line with its strategic priorities moving forward. This technological advancement ensures that Naropa can maintain a clear and consistent alignment between its financial resources and institutional goals. Furthermore, the [budget planning worksheet](#) requires departments to align their departmental objective, and by extension, their budget requests to the University's strategic plan goals.

The creation of the [Center for Mission, Culture, and Inclusive Community \(MCIC\)](#) is a testament to Naropa's dedication to integrating its mission throughout the institution. This division leads efforts to ensure mission alignment at all levels of the [student experience](#) and supports employee training ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#)) and engagement. By [allocating resources](#) to [MCIC](#), Naropa demonstrates its commitment to creating an inclusive community that reflects its core values. This strategic investment not only fosters a supportive environment for students and staff but also reinforces the university's dedication to its mission of inclusivity and cultural awareness.

Additionally, through consultation with MCIC, the university has also revised its [admissions application process](#), incorporating interview questions that emphasize participation in an inclusive community.

Naropa has made significant strides in providing high-quality online education, as exemplified by its successful [attainment](#) of a second [Title III grant](#), detailed in section 5.C.5. This grant has been instrumental in developing the infrastructure to support online education within the [Office of Educational Technologies](#). By leveraging the Title III grant, Naropa has greatly [expanded its footprint in online education](#), aligning with the university's mission to provide high-quality, accessible education. This strategic investment ensures that resources are effectively used to improve student success and institutional capacity, furthering Naropa's educational mission.

Furthermore, the university's engagement in strategic planning processes, such as [Create 2022, Envision 2023](#)), and the [BIG 5](#) (discussed further in 5C-2), demonstrates a proactive approach to resource allocation. These initiatives serve as frameworks for identifying and prioritizing areas of investment that align closely with Naropa's mission and long-term objectives, fostering an environment of continuous improvement and strategic growth within the institution.

There are areas where Naropa can improve to ensure even stronger alignment between resource allocation and its mission. Performing this consistently is crucial to ensure that all initiatives align with the university's strategic priorities. Additionally, the discontinuation of processes linking assessment of student learning and evaluation of operations with planning and budgeting has highlighted a gap. Addressing this gap is essential to support informed budget submissions and maintaining a cohesive strategy for resource allocation. Naropa introduced the [budget planning worksheet](#) in FY 2023-2024 for development of the 2024-2025 budget. This form includes explicit instructions to connect budget requests to academic assessment and data analysis. Additionally, changes to [annual assessment forms in AY 2023-2024](#) prompt program chairs and directors to consider data-driven decision-making throughout the academic and fiscal year ([Ex 1](#), [Ex 2](#), [Ex 3](#)). These measures aim to reintegrate the process of linking student learning outcomes with budget planning, facilitating better-informed financial decisions. While the [budget planning worksheet](#) partially addresses this gap, there remains opportunity for a more close linkage to assessment processes of student learning outcomes. The University is continuing to review and evaluate these processes to ensure the linkage between them are continuing to improve with each budget cycle.

5C-2

Naropa University has established procedures to link the evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. Program assessment, goals, key performance indicators, and data analyses were still used within budget requests, demonstrated by [Wisdom Traditions](#), [Interdisciplinary Studies](#) and [Psychology](#) ensuring resource allocation was aligned with institutional goals. This approach was effective in meeting institutional requirements and supporting informed decision-making.

Naropa has demonstrated its commitment to using assessment and analysis to inform operations and planning. For example, retention data analysis has justified changes in the Office of Student

Success, and enrollment challenges have led to the successful [application](#) for a [Title III](#) grant to enhance educational offerings and technology.

Furthermore, Naropa is leveraging technological tools to support and assess student learning, retention efforts, career development services, and co-curricular activities. These tools will enhance the university's assessment capabilities, providing detailed data to inform decision-making. The [CACREP](#) assessment plan developed by the MA CMHC program exemplifies this approach, using tools within the Canvas LMS to track student achievement against specific KPIs.

In summary, Naropa University has maintained a process linking assessment, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. While there are opportunities for improvement in consistently integrating student learning assessments into budget planning, recent initiatives and technological advancements demonstrate Naropa's ongoing efforts to align resource allocation with its mission and strategic priorities.

5C-3

Naropa University exemplifies a robust commitment to [shared governance and integrated planning](#) by involving diverse stakeholders in its strategic conversations and decision-making processes. This collaborative approach includes regular engagement with the [Executive Leadership Council](#), [Academic Council](#), [Cauldron](#), the Student Union of Naropa (SUN), and the [University Review](#). The President actively seeks input from these groups, fostering continuous engagement across various university committees.

The [board of trustees](#) also embodies this inclusivity, comprising alumni, parents, community members, and industry leaders. In accordance with the [BOT Amended Bylaws](#), both faculty and student representatives hold voting rights, promoting a comprehensive governance structure. The [President and Chief Academic Officer](#) attend each meeting of the faculty senate as non-voting members. Major administrative searches, such as the recent [appointment of a Chief Academic Officer](#), integrate community input, further demonstrating Naropa's inclusive practices.

Formation and Implementation of Strategic Priorities

The establishment of the Executive Leadership Council (ELC) in November 2021 marked a significant step in Naropa's strategic planning process. From January to July 2022, the ELC conducted a [comprehensive evaluation](#) of the "[Create 2022](#)" initiative and set the stage for "[Envision 2023](#)." This evaluation, including a force field analysis, identified both supportive and inhibitive factors affecting the university's objectives.

The strategic planning process culminated in identifying five key priorities, known as the [BIG 5](#). To operationalize the strategic priorities, the ELC formed [ELCO groups](#), each tasked with specific [objectives and deliverables](#). These groups comprised a diverse mix of faculty and staff, ensuring broad representation across the institution. Each priority is supported by designated lead and support executive sponsors responsible for guiding and ensuring accountability in the initiatives. The formation and operationalization of these priorities underscore Naropa's commitment to inclusivity and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

1. Establishing Naropa as the Leading Institution in Contemplative Education

This priority aims to enhance global and local brand awareness, establish clarity on the definition and outcomes of contemplative education, and integrate these principles across the curriculum. Initiatives include providing Contemplative 101 training for faculty and creating a Contemplative Resource Hub, reflecting an inclusive approach to educational enhancement.

2. Creating a Sustainable Enrollment and Retention Strategy

Addressing challenges such as limited brand recognition and the need for robust support for non-traditional students, this priority involves developing clear goals and timelines for increasing enrollments and improving the student experience. The strategy includes partnering with external consultants for program research and market analysis to create new enrollment streams and improve program efficiency.

3. Developing and Supporting an Academically Recognized Faculty

This priority focuses on improving faculty morale, promoting shared governance, and attracting and retaining distinguished faculty members. Key initiatives include conducting faculty surveys to assess morale, providing professional development opportunities, and defining a model of faculty shared governance. These efforts ensure that faculty voices are central to the planning process and contribute to a vibrant academic community.

4. Delivering a Robust Financial and Operational Portfolio

To enhance operational efficiency, this priority emphasizes the creation of clear policies and processes that align resources with strategic priorities. Initiatives include empowering professional staff to set policies, increasing financial literacy among stakeholders, and developing a comprehensive repository of standard operating procedures. These measures aim to build a culture of accountability and strategic growth.

5. Building an Inspired People Culture Rooted in JEDI Principles

Emphasizing Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), this priority seeks to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all community members. The strategic plan includes initiatives to foster equity and diversity, ensuring that Naropa remains a place where every voice is valued.

Ongoing Efforts and Areas for Improvement

Naropa's recent efforts to enhance internal engagement and transparency include community budget presentations to the [Academic Council, SUN](#), and [University Review](#). Additionally, robust financial reporting to the [Board, ELC](#), and through town hall presentations to the entire community facilitate the [clear understanding of the University's financial position](#) along with strategies being undertaken to address those challenges.

In summary, the formation of the [Executive Leadership Council](#), [ELCO groups](#), and the [implementation of the BIG 5 strategic priorities](#) demonstrate Naropa University's dedication to inclusivity and the incorporation of diverse perspectives in its strategic planning process. By actively involving faculty, staff, and students, Naropa ensures that its vision for the future is grounded in the collective wisdom and experiences of its community.

5C-4

Naropa University recognizes the importance of planning based on its current capacity. The newly initiative [multi-year budget planning model](#) has been a major first step in future planning for potential fluctuations in enrollment, fundraising and other revenues as well as associated expenses. This planning tool along with the [Financial Scenario Modeling](#) tool facilitates integrated planning to support academic, fiscal, and operational planning within the confines of its current capacities.

Using these practices along with making degree program decisions in part based on clear links to career opportunities Naropa has initiated the following:

- Launch of low-residency [MDIV program](#)
- Additional start dates for low-residency [MTC program](#)

Capacity Planning Through Comprehensive Data Analysis

Naropa University has implemented a robust system for understanding and planning based on its current capacity, utilizing a collaborative approach that involves multiple departments and data-driven strategies. The institution's [Revenue Projections](#) worksheet, a joint effort between Finance, Institutional Research, and DESS, forms the foundation of this process. These projections are carefully crafted considering revenue needs, class caps/goals, and past year's performance. The university has enhanced its planning capabilities by tracking attrition between semesters and incorporating this data into its strategies. The Board of Trustees is kept informed through a variety of [reports and analysis](#) culminating in the [Multi-Year Budget Model](#), ensuring transparency and alignment with institutional goals. Naropa has also refined its approach to enrollment forecasting by actively monitoring melt, which influences critical decisions such as application closure dates and wait listing procedures. This [Revenue Projections](#) worksheet is a critical component involved on the creation of the previously discussed [Multi-Year Budget Planning Model](#).

Additionally, Naropa conducts increased research on stop-out and leave behaviors, particularly for low-residency and online students, to inform capacity planning. The institution is mindful of changing demographics, noting a decline in [residential population and an increase in online/low-residency](#) students, which impacts various aspects of planning, including physical campus space and faculty hiring decisions. This has become an important driver for the decision to sell the main campus in order to recapitalize the institution for future expansion and growth. Furthermore, Naropa demonstrates awareness and planning around accreditation requirements, such as those set by [CACREP](#), and their implications for capacity and faculty criteria.

5C-5

The university has shown adaptability to evolving external factors through several initiatives, including the expansion of online and low-residency programs with the support of a [Title III grant](#), the creation of the [Center for Psychedelic Studies](#), and pursuing strategic partnerships in line with its mission such as with [Coopersmith Career Consulting](#).

Naropa University has successfully leveraged its [Title III grant "Leveraging Educational Technology for Student Success"](#) to enhance its academic offerings and address institutional challenges. As of the [February 2025 update](#), the university has developed 69 online asynchronous undergraduate courses, surpassing its five-year goal of 55 courses a year ahead of schedule. This achievement supports four new online BA degree programs in Psychology, Art Therapy, Environmental Studies, and Interdisciplinary Studies.

By the completion of the grant, we will have established four online undergraduate majors ([Psychology](#), [Art Therapy](#), [Environmental Studies](#), [Interdisciplinary Studies](#)) and three minors ([Yoga Studies](#), [Leadership Studies](#), [Psychedelic Studies](#)). The success of this grant supports Naropa's planning process by demonstrating our ability to anticipate and respond to technological advancements, demographic shifts, and the evolving landscape of higher education. This strategic initiative has fortified our academic offerings, ensuring we meet the needs of our diverse student body and continue to thrive in a dynamic educational environment.

The university's new undergraduate programs cater to a diverse and evolving student demographic, with an average student age of 28 to 34 and [78%](#) being transfer students. This demographic awareness allows Naropa to serve non-traditional adult learners who need flexible learning options. Additionally, the expansion extends Naropa's reach beyond its Boulder campus, attracting students nationwide and globally, thus enhancing the university's diversity and international reputation. Online programs provide a cost-effective alternative for students who might find the high cost of living in Boulder prohibitive, demonstrating Naropa's commitment to accessible and affordable education. Enrollment growth and retention rates in online undergraduate programs demonstrates the success of this initiative, with total headcount enrollment in online undergraduate programs growing to 140 students and 1-year retention rates of around 80% for our initial cohorts.

Naropa University has also expanded online and low-residency graduate programs outside the grant, demonstrating a strategic and forward-thinking approach to address evolving external

factors. The university now offers a low-residency [MA CMHC](#) program, a low-residency [MDIV](#), and a low-residency [MA Yoga](#) Studies in addition to its low-residency [MFA in Creative Writing](#) and MA in [Ecopsychology](#). These new graduate programs have allowed the university to grow its graduate student population by 265 students over the past 4 years.

Naropa's unique niche in online education, with programs reflecting its contemplative approach, sets it apart from other institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need for flexible learning solutions, and Naropa has integrated lessons learned into its long-term strategy, with [40% of its student body now enrolled in online or low-residency programs](#). This shift positions the university for sustainable growth without extensive physical campus expansion. Structural and organizational changes have also been made to provide additional support for Naropa's growing online campus (See 3.C and 3.D). These changes include the deployment of enhanced [cybersecurity measures](#) to protect student data and privacy, and the development of comprehensive training programs for faculty to effectively utilize new tools and technologies in their teaching. Additionally, there has been an increased use of video conference technology such as TEAMS and Zoom to facilitate virtual classrooms, meetings, and collaboration, ensuring that the online learning experience is interactive and engaging.

These initiatives reflect Naropa's commitment to leveraging technological advancements, responding to demographic shifts, adapting to economic realities, and meeting changing student needs. By continuing to expand online and low-residency degree offerings, Naropa is proactively utilizing modern technology to enhance learning experiences and accessibility, ensuring relevance in an increasingly digital world.

The university has also entered into a [degree completion partnership](#) with [Coopersmith Career Consulting](#) to build upon its successful initiatives in online programming and seek new revenue streams. This partnership aims to meet the needs of non-traditional learners seeking to complete their bachelor's degrees, aligning with Naropa's strategic goals of accessibility and inclusivity in higher education. The revenue generated from this partnership can be reinvested into the university to support and grow existing and new programs, enhancing academic offerings, improving facilities, and strengthening student support services. By diversifying revenue streams through strategic partnerships, Naropa can reduce its reliance on traditional funding sources and mitigate financial risks associated with fluctuations in enrollment or changes in government funding. This financial stability will enable the university to maintain its commitment to academic excellence, student success, and the overall advancement of its mission.

Overall, these developments represent a proactive approach by Naropa to address challenges posed by the modern environment of higher education and demonstrate the institution's commitment to innovation and meeting the evolving needs of students. This positions the university for continued growth and sustainability by aligning new revenue streams with its core mission and values.

The university conducts [quarterly budget-to-actual reviews with Deans and VPs](#) to review spending trends throughout the year for the purpose of enhance sustainability. The Chief Financial Officer and Controller monitor budgets for variances and collaborates with

departments to discuss cost containment strategies. Additionally, payroll authorization expenses are reviewed by the [Chief Financial Officer \(CFO\) for amounts over \\$1000](#), ensuring that spending remains within budgetary limits. [Periodic financial statements](#) (at least quarterly) prepared by the CFO are [presented to the BOT's Finance and Sustainability Committee](#), facilitating transparency and informed financial decision-making.

Naropa University's [committee structure](#) and [curriculum change processes](#) demonstrate a commitment to improving operations and student outcomes. The University Review Committee plays a crucial role in cross-divisional collaboration, addressing challenges in systems and operations, and providing feedback on curriculum changes. This committee has been instrumental in the successful launch of online BA programs as previously noted and in addressing ongoing operational challenges across all degree programs.

Naropa University's adoption of the [Integrative University Work Cycle](#) underscores its commitment to systematically improving operations and student outcomes. This work cycle was initiated to address misalignments between the budget cycle, Board of Trustees (BOT) approvals, academic planning, faculty hiring, and financial aid discount strategies. By asking each department to identify the optimal timing for their critical activities, the work cycle resolved discrepancies and established a [comprehensive calendar with triggers for key actions](#). The work cycle has led to several significant improvements:

- The cycles for creating handbooks and catalogs are now better coordinated, ensuring timely updates and availability of essential information for students and faculty.
- Cyclical reminders are in place for the Dean of Students to present support offerings to Marketing and Admissions, enhancing student services.
- Thoughtful scheduling has improved the ability to forecast financial needs and outcomes.
- The earlier opening of admissions applications for the following academic year, starting two summers prior, resulted in an immediate uptick in application volume. Although application volume has since declined, the initial increase highlights the positive impact of the work cycle on admissions processes.
- Previously, the scheduling of intensives was very late, negatively impacting enrollment. The work cycle has pushed intensive scheduling to an earlier point, which is ideal for students and has strengthened programs such as the low-residency Transpersonal Counseling program.

The [work cycle includes federal filing deadlines](#), ensuring that the university remains in compliance with regulatory requirements.

By fostering collaboration between departments, optimizing operational effectiveness, and reducing administrative inefficiency, the Integrative University Work Cycle has created a more synergistic and effective working environment. This allows faculty and staff to focus more on serving students, ultimately enhancing student outcomes and the overall functioning of the university.

The creation of [ELCO](#) groups to operationalize the university's strategic priorities further demonstrates Naropa's dedication to improving operations and student outcomes. These groups

ensure that the university's [strategic initiatives are systematically implemented and aligned with its mission and vision](#).

Naropa has also engaged in a yearlong process with [Ruffalo Noel Levitz \(RNL\)](#) to review our academic programs and determine how to create/revitalize programs that are in line with the current high education landscape. It was determined that to best serve student's needs, we focused on flexibility and creating different learning modalities. As a result of that work with our consultants, we have invested more heavily in online programs thus creating the basis for our new BA in Psychology, BA Environmental Studies, BA Art Therapy, and BA Interdisciplinary—all four programs are completely online. Prior to 2020, 0% of Naropa students were enrolled in an online/low residency program. Today, over 40% are enrolled in this type of program. [Enrollment has increased 30% in three years, largely due to our expanded programs](#).

Through systematic reporting, financial oversight, operational improvements, strategic planning, and a commitment to inclusivity, Naropa University demonstrates its dedication to systematically improving its operations and student outcomes. These efforts ensure that the university remains responsive to the needs of its students and continues to fulfill its mission of providing a transformative education.

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- Transfer Student Webpage
- WIS 2025-2026 Budget Planning Worksheet v2.WIS.2.12.25 Edit

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

Summary strengths:

1. The university ensures sufficient resources for achieving its mission by first securing significant capital reserves through asset sales and capital restructuring.
2. The university has undergone or is undergoing independent reviews of key support services such as facilities and information technologies to understand the current status as well as opportunities for improvement.
3. The university's budgeting and related institutional planning processes have been refined to ensure that the allocation of financial and other resources are aligned with the university's mission, strategic priorities, and departmental improvement performance efforts.
4. The multi-year budget planning model as well as the financial scenario model tool enables the leadership to calculate impacts of nearly any scenario than can be imagined in order to ensure the university's ability to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Future Considerations:

1. The university will continue to work to more clearly link the assessment of student learning outcomes to the budgeting process if and when there are financial implications.
2. The university will continue inclusive planning efforts for the transition from the historical main campus to the future physical footprint needs of the educational offerings.

Sources

There are no sources.