Brigham Young University

Mid-Cycle Self-Evaluation Report

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

March 3, 2025

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Brigham Young University

(Name of Institution)

C. Shane Reese

(Name of Chief Executive Officer)

(Signature of Chief Executive Officer)

3 March 2025

(Date)

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1. Mission Fulfillment

Brigham Young University (BYU) was established in 1875 and is sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The university primarily focuses on undergraduate education while offering selected graduate programs of significance across nearly 50 disciplines. According to the February 2025 Carnegie research designations, BYU is classified as "Research 1: Very High Spending and Doctorate Production."[1] BYU strongly emphasizes teaching and research; notably, faculty members engage undergraduate students as co-researchers. The Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools, the predecessor to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), first accredited the university in 1923 (NWCCU Eligibility Requirements 1, 2).

BYU seeks to develop students of faith, intellect, and character who are prepared to continue learning and serving throughout their lives. This purpose is further explained in the Mission of BYU and Aims of a BYU Education. At BYU, belief enhances inquiry, study amplifies faith, and revelation leads to rich understanding. As the flagship higher education institution of the Church Educational System of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, BYU strives to be among the exceptional universities in the world and an essential university for the world.

BYU offers bachelor's degrees in 198 academic programs, master's in 93, and doctorates in 30. BYU's academic units include 10 colleges or schools; 54 departments; Religious Education; Continuing Education; Undergraduate Education; Graduate Studies; the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies; three university-wide centers or institutes, including the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Wheatley Institute, Sorensen Center for Moral and Ethical Leadership; four museums; and several academic support units, including the Harold B. Lee Library. In July 2024, the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced the decision to create a medical school at BYU. The university is located on a 622-acre campus in Provo, Utah.

As of fall semester 2024, BYU has 35,873 students, including 32,952 undergraduate and 2,921 graduate students. The number of full-time-equivalent students is 35,102. The students come from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 107 countries. For fall 2024, the average ACT equivalent score for entering first-year students was 29.7[2], and the average high school GPA was 3.90.

As of fall semester 2024, the university has 1,594 full-time faculty. This number includes 1,376 full-time faculty primarily assigned to instruction or research and 218 other full-time faculty (e.g., librarians, counselors, vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, associate deans, directors, and department chairs). There are 668 part-time faculty. The university employs 1,923 full-time administrative employees and 825 full-time staff employees. Part-time employees include 1,382 staff and 15,018 students.

The university president is C. Shane Reese. A 12-person President's Council assists the president in leading the university. The Board of Trustees comprises 11 general authorities and officers of

[1] See BYU News. February 13, 2025

[2] Because of difficulties scheduling tests during COVID, BYU adopted a test-optional policy and is currently test optional through 2026. Our test-optional policy may have slightly inflated scores.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Board provides broad direction and oversight. (NWCCU Standards 2.A.1; 2.A.2)

The university has a five-year plan with seven strategic objectives. These strategic objectives capture President C. Shane Reese's focus on "Becoming BYU" and emphasize the university's intention to continue as a student-centered, faith-based institution. (NWCCU Standard 2.A.3)

This strategic plan is posted on the university website and incorporated into university processes (e.g., annual strategic resource planning and unit reviews). A copy of the strategic plan was also distributed to all full-time employees in August 2024. During annual strategic resource planning, units are asked to align their strategic objectives with the university's. The president refers to the strategic plan at the university conference, which starts each academic year, and regularly refers to the strategic objectives during other speaking engagements. He also annually reports to the Board of Trustees on the plan's progress. In addition, the university annually reports to the Church Educational System commissioner one key metric for each strategic objective (see appendix).

The university measures mission fulfillment through an assessment of BYU's core themes, which are the Aims of a BYU Education: (1) spiritually strengthening, (2) intellectually enlarging, and (3) character building, leading to (4) lifelong learning and service. For several years, the university used 170 indicators to reflect mission fulfillment. In 2022, the assistant to the president for assessment and planning convened a workgroup representing units across campus to develop new metrics for measuring the BYU Aims. The President's Council approved these new measures in 2023. Data collection for these metrics began in 2024. The most recent core themes data for mission fulfillment report is on the university data website.

The President's Council annually reviews the strategic objectives, key metrics, and core themes data. As mentioned above, a BYU education should be spiritually strengthening and intellectually enlarging; neither one should be sacrificed at the expense of the other. The data indicate that we are below our desired level in our spiritually strengthening aim, particularly in building faith in Jesus Christ and testimonies of living prophets and apostles. The President's Council's goal is to close the gap between intellectually enlarging and spiritually strengthening scores without compromising BYU's high academic standards. The university leadership regularly tracks student rating scores for all BYU aims. In the last five years semesters, the proportion of courses where students report that the class was both spiritually strengthening and intellectually enlarging was, on average, 80 percent.

In both formal and informal settings, the president, academic vice president, and other academic leaders consistently emphasize the message of our "dual heritage" where, as scholars, we can "speak with authority and excellence to your professional colleagues in the language of scholarship, and…be literate in the language of spiritual things."[3] Section 2.C.3 outlines two examples of efforts to increase the faculty's ability to provide a spiritually strengthening education. All faculty members are asked to develop course learning outcomes based on the BYU aims. Furthermore, all faculty teaching the new UNIV 101 Foundations for BYU Student Success receive nine hours of training on best-practice pedagogy.

Another area for improvement in our strategic objectives is enhancing awareness of BYU. Last year, the BYU administration hired a chief strategic communications and messaging officer. A

[3] Spencer W. Kimball. The Second Century of Brigham Young University. October 10, 1975

university Strategic Communications Committee, chaired by the advancement vice president, was also established, and a strategic communications plan was created. The committee has implemented a process for reviewing annual enterprise messaging plans that involves review and approval before implementation and assessment afterward. This has been applied to key messaging for alumni, students, employees, prospective students, and external public communications. The committee has also intentionally engaged with communication staff in campus units (i.e., campus communicators) to support and enable their messaging to be effective and aligned with the university brand.

2. Student Achievement

2.A. Indicators of Academic Student Achievement

(NWCCU Standard 1.D.2)

Seven public-facing dashboards display rates for the following academic student success metrics: retention, overall graduation rate, financial aid award rate, financial aid default rate, and an overall summary. The graduation rates are disaggregated by race and ethnicity and financial aid status (i.e., Pell recipients, subsidized Stafford loan not receiving Pell grant, and not receiving Pell or subsidized Stafford loan). These public-facing dashboard data are based on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) cohort of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students entering the institution during the fall term. These data tables are updated annually when the previous academic year data are released by the U.S. Department of Education in April of the following academic year (i.e., 2024-2025 data will be released in April 2026). Copies of these dashboards are also included in the appendix.

2.A.1. Peer Institutions and Comparison

(NWCCU Standard 1.D.3)

The peer comparisons include three groups: (1) Big 12 athletic conference peer institutions, (2) regional peer institutions (ten NWCCU peer schools), and (3) state peer institutions (six Utah peer schools). The university selected peer institutions using the following criteria. Big 12 schools are the 15 schools currently in BYU's athletic conference. Regional peer institutions are those accredited by NWCCU with 20,000 or more students and a primary Carnegie classification of Research 1: very high spending and doctorate production or Research 2: high spending and doctorate production. State peer institutions are public institutions with a university designation and comparable enrollment. A list of the peer institutions is available in the appendix.

As seen in the dashboards, for the reporting year 2023-2024, BYU's 2015 cohort four-year graduation rate (25 percent) is similar to our Utah peer institutions (23 percent; range 15-36 percent) but lower than NWCCU peers (39 percent; range 19-71 percent) and Big 12 peers (48 percent; range 36-71 percent).

BYU's most recent six-year graduation rate (2017-2018 cohort) is 82 percent. This is higher than Utah peers (50 percent), NWCCU peers (64 percent), and Big 12 peers (71 percent). The same pattern holds for the most recent eight-year graduation rate (2015-2016 cohort) for BYU (82 percent), Utah peers (49 percent), NWCCU peers (65 percent), and Big 12 peers (72 percent).

BYU's full-time retention rate of 89 percent for the 2023-2024 reporting year is higher than our Utah peers (72 percent; range 63-85 percent) and NWCCU peers at 82 percent, except the University of Washington (95 percent), and our Big 12 peers at 87 percent, except TCU (94 percent), University of Central Florida (92 percent), and Baylor (91 percent).

BYU also measures retention by examining students who return for their third major semester instead of looking at fall enrollment in the second year, which is common at most institutions and reported by IPEDS. This time frame is unique because historically, 30 to 45 percent of students interrupt their academic enrollment after their first or second semester to serve a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This indicates that their third semester may follow a two-year gap in their enrollment, making the third semester a more significant measure for BYU than second-year retention. The third-semester retention rate for the last six cohort years ranges from 90 to 95 percent. There are no significant differences between most demographic groups. However, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander tend to fall five or more percentage points below the overall average in most, but not all, years. These third major semester data are found in the appendix.

In the 2023-2024 reporting year, 64 percent of full-time, first-time BYU undergraduates were awarded any financial aid. This contrasts with 91 percent of Utah peer schools, 86 percent at NWCCU peer institutions, and 89 percent among Big 12 peers. BYU's five-year average default rate for financial aid stands at one percent.

The factor that likely accounts for the gap in financial aid rates between BYU and other peer institutions is the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, which provided funding to schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. BYU opted not to accept this funding. Most of this support was intended for students as grants or emergency assistance. Since many schools awarded financial aid based solely on enrollment, it is probable that most, if not all, students received some form of financial assistance during this period. For most institutions, the final allocation of this funding would have been distributed in the 2022-2023 academic year. We expect financial aid rates to become more comparable as we progress into the 2024-2025 reporting year.

2.A.2. Other Metrics of Student Achievement

(NWCCU Standard 1.D.4)

In comparing BYU's graduation rates with those of peers, we use the publicly available IPEDS data from first-year, first-time, fall semester enrollment students. To have a more complete picture of the entire BYU matriculated student body, including transfer students and students who begin their enrollment outside the fall semester, we have identified additional indicators of success. These metrics are discussed below.

Enrollments to Graduation

To facilitate meaningful analysis of all BYU students' time to graduation, we created an internal-facing dashboard called enrollments to graduation. An enrollment is considered one fall or winter semester; a half enrollment is considered a spring or summer term. Measuring enrollments allows us to account for the time students may pause their education to serve an 18 to 24-month mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This dashboard showcases a cohort of full and part-time, matriculated, day-eligible, degree-seeking students who enter BYU at any point during the academic year. Users can filter it by sex, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, Pell eligibility, and student type (new first-year and incoming transfer students). Colleges and departments can view their overall enrollments and graduation rates. However, at this time, colleges and departments cannot filter these results by demographic factors. Copies of the enrollments to graduation dashboard are included in the appendix.

The 2017-2018 cohort has an overall graduation rate of 69 percent within 12 enrollments, roughly equivalent to a six-year graduation rate. This rate falls short of the university goal of 75 percent. Disaggregated data reveals notable differences; males have a lower graduation rate than females (66 percent vs. 71 percent, respectively). Sixty percent of first-generation students graduate within 12 enrollments, compared to 70 percent of non-first-generation students. Similarly, 65 percent of Pell-eligible students graduate within 12 enrollments, while 70 percent of non-Pell-eligible students do so. A higher percentage of transfer students graduate within 12 enrollments than new freshmen (75 percent versus 67 percent). Asian and White students have a higher graduation rate of 70 percent, exceeding the overall average. Other racial and ethnic groups report graduation rates ranging from 42 percent to 66 percent. Due to small yearly cohort cell sizes (e.g., 21 American Indian or Alaska Native students in this cohort, with 11 graduating within twelve enrollments), we often examine graduation rates across multiple years. Going forward, these data will be disaggregated by full and part-time status.

BYU-Specific Intermediate Indicators

BYU selected three intermediate indicators to measure student academic progress. These three indicators give insight and bridge the gap between first-year retention and graduation data. Together, these metrics measure progress in an academic program. The indicators are (1) major declared, (2) GPA above 2.0, and (3) credit completion rate above 66 percent. These are internal metrics, so data from comparable peer institutions are unavailable.

Major Declared. BYU students are accepted into the university rather than into specific colleges. Students are not required to select a major to enroll in; they are only required to have a declared major after earning 60 credits. A declared major indicates that a student has chosen an academic path, and it connects students directly with a college advisement center. On average, in the last five years, over 93 percent of students in each fall semester have a declared major. When looking at disaggregated data, students of Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander heritage have a slightly lower declared major rate at 89-90 percent. These major declared data are available in the appendix.

GPA 2.0 or Above. Students must have a BYU cumulative and semester GPA above 2.0 to be in good academic standing, be eligible for federal financial aid, and graduate. Transfer GPAs do not factor into the 2.0 BYU cumulative GPA. In addition, if a student is on academic "warning" and receives over a 2.0 semester GPA, they will not move to "good" academic standing unless the BYU cumulative GPA is also over 2.0.

On average, over the last five years, 92 percent of students have earned above a 2.0 each semester. There are slight differences in this five-year average rate among certain groups, including first-generation (88 percent), international students (88.5 percent), and certain racial and ethnic groups (79 to 90 percent). The GPA data above 2.0 are available in the appendix.

Credit Completion Rate Above 66 Percent. Students must complete at least 66 percent of the credits they attempt (credit completion rate) each semester to make adequate progress toward graduation and remain eligible for federal financial aid. Over the past five years, 93 percent of students have completed more than 66 percent of their attempted credits. However, disparities exist among some racial or ethnic student groups. In most fall semesters, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic students, and students reporting two or more races have lower rates of meeting this metric (83 to 92 percent). These credit completion data are available in the appendix. While a 66 percent credit completion rate may be suitable for ensuring progress toward graduation and maintaining eligibility for financial aid, this value may be too low given our graduation data modeling (discussed in section 2.B). The university may need to consider revising this metric.

2.B. Predictors of Graduating from BYU

(NWCCU Standard 1.D.4)

BYU's student success strategy is data-driven. Starting in October 2023, the Office of Assessment and Planning has been involved in data modeling analyses to understand the predictors of not graduating from BYU. Between March and September 2024, the graduation data modeling results were shared with various stakeholders across campus during 10 formal presentations, including to the university president, President's Council, the Academic Vice President's Council, University Curriculum Council, Enrollment Services, GE Academy, Dean's Council, Student Success Executive Council, Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and campus advisors.

These data modeling results indicate that the credit completion rate is the strongest predictor of graduation from BYU. The credit completion rate refers to the percentage of credits the student completes relative to the credits attempted. On average, students who complete 83 percent of their attempted credits are more likely to graduate from BYU than not to graduate. In the presence of a credit completion rate, demographic variables are not significant in predicting graduation. Because of these data, focusing on reducing D-E-W rates is a major emphasis of our student success strategy.

Factors predicting students receiving a non-credit grade (i.e., failing D [defined below], E, or withdrawing) include the following:

(1) Previous academic performance at BYU (previous BYU GPA or academic preparation index if it is the first semester; prior counts of E and W grades).

(2) Being in their first or second year.

(3) Course characteristics (high gateway course scores [defined below] and courses in the College of Computational, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences.

A failing D means that a student cannot receive a D grade in a course to progress in the degree. Gateway classes refer to 100 – 200-level courses with high total course enrollments (i.e., many students take these classes each semester), a large percentage of students required to take the class for their major, and significant roadblock potential (i.e., passing the course is essential for progressing in a major).

The university administration acknowledges that students from varied backgrounds tend to have lower credit completion rates on average. College deans and department chairs have access to

dashboards that show the percentage of students earning grades of D, E, or W in specific courses (see a sample college D-E-W dashboard in the appendix). Data dashboards enable departments and colleges to analyze the D-E-W rate for each course disaggregated by demographic variables such as sex, first-generation status, and racial or ethnic group status. The appendix provides examples of how units have used these data to improve pedagogy in statistics, education, accounting, and computer science courses. For example, by modifying pedagogy in Statistics 121, Professor Matt Heaton cut the D-E-W rate from 19 to 9 percent. In Computer Science, the faculty split an original CS 142 (Introduction to Computer Programming) class into two classes: CS 110 for those with no programming experience and CS 111 for those with previous experience in programming or those who took CS 110 first. The results were excellent– the D-E-W rate was cut in half.

The Office of Assessment and Planning has conducted further research to understand why students might withdraw from a course and how these withdrawals impact the likelihood of students re-enrolling at the university. This information has been shared with the Student Success Executive Council. The next step is to create messaging based on this information to share with faculty and advisors. The focus of these messages for advisors will be on fostering meaningful conversations with students about their reasons for withdrawing and reviewing their history of course withdrawals. For faculty, the messages will stress that a course can be both rigorous and intellectually challenging while still enabling students to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

2.C. Student Success Strategy

(NWCCU Standard 1.D.4)

The university invests significant resources in helping students succeed. Historically, these efforts have been decentralized, involving outreach from advisement personnel, individual faculty, and other staff. Over the past two and a half years, the BYU administration, led by the Student Success Executive Council, has developed a more robust institutional response to support academic student success. The Student Success Executive Council is chaired by the associate academic vice president for undergraduate studies, with members including the student life vice president, belonging vice president, dean of undergraduate education, an associate dean, a dean, senior associate athletic director, and assistant to the president for assessment and planning. During the last year, the SSEC has met bi-weekly to develop and refine the vision for student success, identify guiding principles, review data from the graduation data modeling, and give presentations to key stakeholder groups across campus. The history of the progression of the Student Success Executive Council can be found in the appendix.

2.C.1. Vision for BYU Student Success

The vision for BYU student success, approved by the BYU President's Council on January 13, 2025, is:

> Student success means helping students to graduate from BYU and, in the process, to increase their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen their testimonies of His restored gospel and Church, including prophets and apostles, expand their minds, and cultivate Christlike character and virtues. Students should graduate from BYU equipped with the capacity and fired with the desire to spend the rest of their lives learning for the Savior's glory and serving others in His name.

To this end, the BYU Student Success Model builds upon the university's strategic priorities (Becoming BYU)—including strengthening the student experience, focusing on undergraduate teaching, and building a covenant community—by encouraging all BYU employees to provide inspiring learning and support to students, minister in the Savior's way, practice and promote principles of accountability, and foster covenant belonging and Christ-centered relationships.

We ask employees to prioritize students so that they are numbered among the members of the BYU community, remembered, nourished, and known by name (see Moroni 6:4).

2.C.2. Student Success Guiding Principles

The BYU Student Success guiding principles are as follows.

Christlike Ministering and Accountability

- Seek spiritual guidance to care for individual students.
- Use data and revelation to inspire institutional and programmatic adjustments for student success.
- Measure progress in helping each student achieve their divine potential.

Covenant Belonging and Relationships

- Counsel together to proactively coordinate a comprehensive plan for each student.
- Link students with peers, faculty, and employees to create a covenant community.
- Serve each other with the understanding of God’s divine design for our lives.

Inspiring Learning and Support

- Employ gospel methodology and model Christlike virtues in teaching, advising, and support.
- Increase experiential learning opportunities that lead to inspiration and revelation.
- Using gospel methodology, provide access to comprehensive individual support and learning resources.

2.C.3. Priority Focus Areas for BYU’s University-Wide Student Success Efforts

Using the student success vision statement and guiding principles, BYU’s university-wide student success efforts are centered on three areas.

(1) Connect students to mission, resources, and university community through BYU Foundations for Student Success (UNIV 101).

(2) Ensure full implementation of Salesforce Student Success Hub and system-wide utilization of the Early Alert system.

(3) Improve course design and pedagogy with a focus on median GPA and assessment practices in courses with high gateway scores and high D-E-W rates.

Current university efforts for each of the priority focus areas are discussed more in-depth below.

BYU Foundations for Student Success (UNIV 101)

A two-credit course called UNIV 101: BYU Foundations for Student Success is central to BYU's student success strategy. BYU began piloting this course during the winter semester of 2023. Starting in the winter semester of 2024, all first-year students in their first semester are required to enroll in and earn credit (graded on a credit/no credit basis) for this course. Enrollment in UNIV 101 is part of the General Education program. Students transferring from other universities do not to take UNIV 101.

The UNIV 101 learning outcomes are that students will:

- recognize and value the unique community, purpose, BYU Mission and Aims and connect the BYU experience to their own educational and spiritual goals;
- identify and feel confident in accessing campus resources that provide support for academic success and personal resiliency in addition to physical, social, and financial well-being;
- develop the character essential to lifelong disciple-scholarship using gospel-centered learning, intellectual humility, and respectful engagement with others; and
- be able to articulate the value of both contributing and belonging to the BYU community by embracing the Honor Code, the Dress and Grooming Principles and Expectations, the Statement on Belonging, and current prophetic guidance, participating in activities and events, and serving others.

BYU's resource investment in this student success initiative is substantial. UNIV 101 is intentionally designed with small sections, each capped at 20-25 students, taught by full-time, tenured, tenure-track faculty who mentor students on BYU's mission and the available resources as they transition to college life and develop skills in community building, service, and disciple-scholarship. This small class size required the university to offer 280 sections during the inaugural fall semester 2024. Most full-time faculty teach this course as an overload in addition to their regular assignments. The university president, academic vice president, and other faculty administrators have also taught sections.

The Office of Undergraduate Education hired a full-time and a half-time employee to work with an associate dean to manage all course logistics, including ongoing faculty training. To foster high-quality teaching in the UNIV 101 class, the university provides nine hours of training regarding best practices for teaching first-year students and $1000 in research money to all faculty who attend the training.

Each Univ 101 section is assigned a peer mentor, a current BYU upper-level student (approximately 180 winter semester 2025). The Office of First-Year Experience trains these peer mentors to assist students as they transition to college life and become independent learners. Although the peer mentors are paid student employees, they are not teaching assistants; they may, however, aid in teaching key concepts. Through regular one-on-one meetings, which include at least three required sessions during the first semester, peer mentors engage students in focused reflection and help them navigate available campus resources. They continue to support UNIV 101 students during their second semester.

The Office of First-Year Experience has seven different peer mentor supervisors. These are full- and part-time staff members who are responsible for supervising the work of groups of 20-40

peer mentors. The supervisors have weekly training meetings with their group, meet individually with their peer mentors 3-4 times each semester, and provide just-in-time training as needed.

Pulse surveys are administered to students enrolled in UNIV 101. These brief diagnostic surveys are conducted several times throughout the semester to assess student well-being across various success areas, including academic, emotional, financial, and physical aspects. Sample questions from the pulse surveys can be found in the appendix. If a student reports significant concerns regarding any part of their experience, Enrollment Services sends a customized message directing them to relevant campus resources and encourages them to seek assistance.

The Office of First-Year Experience also utilizes these pulse survey data to inform proactive and focused outreach to individual students. They receive a report that shows any students who respond with "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" to the pulse survey questions. Beginning the winter semester of 2025, the staff sends a message to the peer mentor and UNIV 101 faculty member for any student on the list. They invite the peer mentor and faculty member to counsel together about how they might reach out and support the student. One faculty member teaching UNIV 101 reported that she received information about students in her class the same week the students had the assignment to visit her during office hours. The timing was perfect for talking to the student about how things were going.

The Office of First-Year Experience director receives a weekly report from each peer mentor supervisor that lists the specific students they are focused on, action steps, and any collaboration with other departments. The goal is to improve how the university supports individual students who appear to be at risk of academic struggle. The pulse surveys, Early Alert dashboards (described below), and graduation indicators have been invaluable in this work.

Preliminary UNIV 101 data from the fall semester of 2024 indicate that 99.3 percent of students received credit for the course. Of the 38 students who did not receive credit, 17 are retaking the course in the winter semester of 2025. Furthermore, among the bottom two percent of students admitted to BYU last fall, fewer than four percent earned an overall GPA below 2.0, compared to around 15 percent the previous year. Although the results from these preliminary data are correlational, they suggest potential early success with the UNIV 101 course in supporting student success.

An exceptional feature of UNIV 101 is the implementation of learning communities for students who may benefit from extra academic support. Collaborating with the BYU Admissions Office, Undergraduate Education identifies approximately 1,200 newly admitted students based on their admissions profiles. These students are invited to join a learning community comprising a cohort enrolled in UNIV 101 and two additional courses from the university core (General Education and Religious Education classes). The faculty members selected to teach in these learning communities are carefully chosen and provided with training focused on student success and effective outreach. The general education courses are also offered in smaller sections, capped at 50 students, which fosters meaningful connections among enrolled students, faculty, and assigned peer mentors. Additionally, learning communities reserve seats in high-demand general education courses for some of BYU's most academically vulnerable students.

Implementation of Salesforce Student Success Hub and Early Alert System

(NWCCU Standard 2.G.6)

In 2021, the university purchased Salesforce Student Success Hub as the software program to track student advisement interactions. Many university advisement-related centers have been onboarded with Salesforce training. A list is included in the appendix. As articulated in the student success priority focus areas (see 2.C.3), the next step is to have all advisors use the Student Success Hub to record every advising interaction with a student. This will provide a student with a consistent BYU advising record and improve collaborative support from campus advisors.

The BYU Early Alert tool, managed by Enrollment Services, utilizes advanced analytics to identify students who are struggling academically. Its goal is to provide early intervention and support to students—particularly those vulnerable to equity gaps—who show signs of difficulty as early as the first week of the semester. Peer mentors proactively reach out to any students identified as academically very high risk during the first week of the semester. Campus advisors can review the dashboards to determine who requires their support (see examples of the Early Alert overview dashboard and Early Alert student-view dashboard in the appendix). Enrollment Services can also create and distribute group messages with relevant information and supporting resources to specific student clusters who meet certain risk criteria (e.g., students enrolled in Physical Science 100 who have not been to a lab) . Additionally, Enrollment Services regularly generates a "significant change report," which identifies students who demonstrate a decline in their scores, signaling a potentially significant event. Advisors can proactively reach out to these students.

Other campus departments, such as the Office of First-Year Experience and full-time Residence Life staff, also have access to the Early Alert dashboard. As articulated in the student success priority focus areas (see 2.C.3), the next step is for all advisors to use the Early Alert system to identify students and proactively reach out to them.

Improving Course Design and Pedagogy

The university Undergraduate Curriculum Council (UCC) is led by the associate academic vice president for undergraduate studies (chair) and the CTL director (co-chair) and has associate dean representation from each academic college and leaders of other academic and academic support units (registrar, library, Student Development Services, Educator Preparation Program, and Graduate Studies). The UCC established three subcommittees related to course design and pedagogy and student success: (1) median GPA, (2) learning outcomes assessment, and (3) learning outcomes and the BYU Aims.

The median GPA subcommittee has proposed recommendations for reducing the number of courses with a median GPA requirement. The learning outcomes assessment subcommittee has proposed recommendations for developing assessments that accurately measure learning outcomes. These recommendations have been used to encourage faculty to evaluate students and assign grades according to learning outcomes instead of using arbitrary median course GPAs. Associate deans report that colleges have applied principles or ideas from the subcommittee's work in their departments and college curriculum councils. The Department of History and Religious Education faculty have voted to eliminate median GPA policies. The coordinator of American Heritage and the Office of Undergraduate Education are also discussing median GPA requirements.

Finally, the learning outcomes and BYU aims subcommittee has proposed recommendations for creating learning outcomes that connect to each of the four Aims of a BYU education. Associate deans have used these to encourage faculty to teach in ways that incorporate these aims.

In order to systematically track these programmatic and course improvements, the CTL developed and released a new program stewardship review process, including an online portal. This is described in Section 3.C. The CTL is also available to provide units with training on developing assessments to measure student achievement of learning outcomes. The CTL is also exploring possibilities for large-scale professional development.

2.C.4. Communications About Student Success Strategy

The Student Success Executive Council is developing a communications plan to share the BYU Student Success vision and guiding principles with campus employees. During February 2025, the council held meetings with key stakeholders, including the Dean's Council, the Advisement Integration Council, new department chairs, the Academic Advisement Leadership Council, and the University Curriculum Council. The Co-Curricular Advisement Council is scheduled for early March. A video featuring the university president, C. Shane Reese, introduces the student success strategy during these meetings.

Academic units are being asked to do the following to support BYU student success efforts.

- Prioritize improving courses with high gateway scores and high D-E-W rates, focusing on changes related to removing median GPA requirements and improving assessment practices.
- Develop program-level learning outcomes that link to the Aims of a BYU education.
- Move all "closing the loop" activities to the new program stewardship review platform.
- Support Univ 101 by providing faculty who embrace the university mission and the course learning outcomes.
- Encourage using the Student Success Hub and Early Alert System in the college advisement center's student success efforts.

Advising-related units are being asked to do the following.

- Use the Salesforce Student Success Hub to record every advising interaction with students.
- Use the Early Alert system to identify students and proactively reach out.
- Have thoughtful conversations with students considering taking a W in a course, focusing on the reasons for the decision and the potential impact on student success.

2.C.5. Ongoing Campus Efforts

(NWCCU Standards 1.D.1; 2.G.6)

In addition to the three university-wide priority focus areas mentioned above, several ongoing initiatives support student success.

First-Year Mentoring

The first-year mentoring program, administered by the Office of First-Year Experience, is a vital part of the university-wide strategy to strengthen undergraduate education. The program's mission is to lead students to greater success by encouraging learning, inspiring reflection, and building relationships through consistent and focused effort and accessing key university resources. The Office of First-Year Experience provides each first-year admitted student with basic information about the university and assigns them a pre-arrival mentor. At the start of a student's first semester, when the student begins Univ 101, the pre-arrival peer mentor passes the baton to the peer mentor assigned to the student's section of Univ 101. The Univ 101 peer mentor remains the student's peer mentor through the end of the second semester.

The Office of First-Year Experience also sponsors a first-generation "ally" program in which willing first-generation students are matched with first-generation faculty/staff to foster another mentoring relationship. The Office of First-Year Experience brings them together for lunch in November. Faculty allies are asked to meet with their assigned students throughout their first year. The Office of First-Year Experience funds faculty and staff allies to take their mentees to lunch twice each semester. Other events promoting financial aid opportunities, stress management, and finals preparation have been held for this group at strategic times during the year.

Enrollment Services Student Success Initiative

Each year, using factors such as first-generation student status, financial need, and college preparation level, the Admissions Office identifies up to 500 admitted students (new and transfer) who show evidence of academic vulnerability. Enrollment Services established the initiative in 2017 as a bridge program to familiarize identified students with the university and connect them with campus support services they can use throughout their time at BYU. Their primary purpose is to proactively establish meaningful connections with students who would benefit from pre-arrival advisement, mentoring, and awareness of applicable campus resources to achieve their goals and thrive at the university.

Enrollment Services assigns each student success initiative student to an Enrollment Services counselor, a full-time employee, before they arrive at BYU. This is in addition to the pre-arrival mentor the Office of First-Year Experience assigns. The counselor provides ongoing support throughout the student's first year. Students are not informed they are part of this initiative. Counselors strive to implement a comprehensive onboarding process with these students, which includes systematic outreach through phone calls, texts, and emails, individual counseling appointments, and training modules in BYU's learning management system, Learning Suite (see a sample training module in the appendix). These training modules educate students about BYU systems, including Learning Suite and MyMAP (a tool to help students create a plan for graduation by planning, organizing, and registering for classes). Counselors also assist students in connecting with their academic advisors, accessing campus resources and financial aid, identifying necessary resources for success, and helping them register for courses. Counselors are uniquely qualified to mentor incoming students because of their extensive training in BYU resources, which they utilize to support all students seeking help from the Enrollment Services office.

Built4Life Center

The Built4Life Center supports all newly admitted and continuing student athletes. The Athletic Department has the highest concentration of students from other faith traditions and racial and ethnic backgrounds on campus. For instance, in the fall semester of 2024, 33 percent of student-athletes identified as ethnically diverse, while 18 percent were not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Summer Bridge program enriches the athletic, social, and academic experiences of student-athletes from minority ethnic groups. This initiative includes referring student-athletes to on-campus support services. The Built4Life Center offers a range of services for student-athletes, including tutoring, academic advisement, learning specialists, mental health counseling, financial aid counseling, career advisement and mentor engagement, belonging services, community service and engagement, and life skills training, which covers money management, tax preparation, and investment planning.

During each semester and term, Built4Life Center staff review approximately 630 student-athletes' grades during weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings. The PLC aims to provide a holistic review of each student's academic standing and needs. It assesses performance, identifies resources, and creates or adjusts learning objectives for individual students. Those who exhibit substandard academic behaviors meet with a learning specialist each Monday to review and evaluate their objectives. This process helps identify learning gaps in real-time and enables timely adjustments to support student needs.

3. Programmatic Assessment

(NWCCU Standards 1.C.5; 1.C.7)

The university has a well-established continuous quality improvement program that evaluates its systems, structures, practices, and student learning. This consists of centralized regular reviews of academic and academic support units, and the annual "closing the loop" or the new program stewardship review performed by academic units.

3.A. Comprehensive Reviews of Academic and Academic Support Units

The Office of Assessment and Planning conducts unit reviews of 71 academic units on a rotating basis every seven years, averaging 10 reviews per academic year. The office also reviews 66 academic support units on the same cycle, averaging nine reviews per calendar year.

The two primary purposes of unit reviews are to support the unit's continuous improvement, and to inform unit strategic planning. When writing a self-study, each unit introspectively assesses its progress over the past seven years, explores future directions, and plans the necessary actions to achieve its strategic objectives. The forward-looking focus of the review process aids units in their strategic planning efforts. Information presented in the unit self-study and gathered during the review's on-site visit is presented in a report to the unit, which provides feedback on how to positively advance and implement essential improvements to enhance student learning and achievement.

The academic unit review also includes an outside critique of a sample of three or more theses and dissertations for units that offer graduate programs. Graduate Studies sends the randomly selected theses and dissertations to subject matter experts at other universities. The reviewer

provides a written evaluation of the thesis or dissertation and scores it *excellent*, *good, fair*, or *poor*.

A new mid-cycle review for all unit reviews at year three commenced for academic units in fall 2023 and for academic support units in winter 2024. The purpose of the mid-cycle review is threefold: (1) to promote formal discussions among unit employees regarding the unit's progress toward the internal report recommendations; (2) to encourage the unit to identify the actions it will take to address each recommendation in preparation for the year seven review; and (3) to provide a report to the responsible vice president, dean, or director, as well as the Office of Assessment and Planning, on the progress of each recommendation.

Two university councils support and facilitate this process: the University Academic Unit Review Council and the Academic Support Unit Review Council. These two councils operate independently using standard procedures. The review team for each unit review includes three or four council members and two external subject matter experts, either faculty or administrators, from other universities. More information about the unit review process can be found on the Assessment and Planning website for academic unit reviews and academic support unit reviews.

Two unit review final reports, one academic (Mechanical Engineering) and one academic support (Special Events), are provided in the appendix as an example.

3.B. Program-level Assessment Current System: The Learning Outcomes Alignment Table

At BYU, refining programs to better support student learning is essential, and the evolution of the assessment system reflects this commitment. The learning outcomes alignment table, initially designed in 2007, has grown to include detailed program learning outcomes, assessment strategies, conclusions based on the data, and actions planned as a result – all aimed at enhancing educational effectiveness to improve student learning. Although the alignment table has served us well, increased usage has revealed significant limitations. For example, the organization of the alignment table does not encourage programs to focus on ongoing progress; it often promotes a reporting or compliance mentality rather than fostering authentic reflection that leads to meaningful program improvement. The university is currently updating its learning assessment system as described next.

3.C. Program-level Assessment New System: Program Stewardship Review

The new program stewardship review process is a holistic, evidence-based approach for evaluating academic program effectiveness, tracking program improvement progress, and fostering authentic reflection and proactive change among department faculty. This review process enables programs to evaluate their progress in providing meaningful student learning experiences and create a new plan for the upcoming year based on the evidence gathered.

The program stewardship review is a shared responsibility between program leadership and faculty. Utilizing the annual program stewardship review framework, faculty members and programs work together to adhere to a common language, processes, and objectives to demonstrate continuous improvement. The program assessment coordinator organizes and oversees the evaluation of collected data, working closely with the department chair to facilitate

faculty engagement. All stakeholders collectively contribute vital insights and feedback that drive meaningful improvements.

The unit completes the following four steps during the program stewardship review.

(1) Report on the results of actions taken during the current academic year.
(2) Review evidence of student learning, the learning environment, and program and professional development to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement and create action items based on them.
(3) Provide time for faculty discussion to identify potential actions based on the evidence.
(4) Prioritize possible actions into a feasible program action plan for the upcoming year.

Each step is described in more detail in the appendix.

A university-wide snapshot of program reviews is gathered annually on August 31. However, programs can conduct summative stewardship reviews at a time that best suits their needs. The process is designed to be flexible and dynamic, allowing the faculty to report progress on their action plan or provide other mid-year updates; they are not required to wait for the annual summative assessment. This feature marks an enhancement over the current alignment table.

Programs are encouraged to complete these reviews before resource planning deadlines (in the spring), as the insights gained can inform and enhance resource planning efforts. Additionally, the annual program stewardship review findings can guide planning for college meetings during the annual university conference week at the beginning of the new academic year.

The program stewardship review was piloted during the 2023-2024 program review cycle. Programs could use the current alignment table system or adopt the new platform. Of the 262 degree programs and minors, 43 (16.4 percent) chose to pilot the new system, 147 (56.1 percent) used the existing alignment table, and 72 (27.4 percent) used neither. University leadership anticipates that the annual program stewardship review will be fully implemented by the 2026-2027 academic year.

A subgroup of high performers—those who intentionally used the new system's features and created a program action plan—was formed among the pilot participants to provide feedback and guidance for further developing the new system. The feedback from this user group was overwhelmingly positive, offering valuable insights into the platform's strengths. Refer to the appendix for remarks from some of these individuals.

The appendix includes examples of the annual program stewardship review process from the Applied Physics BS and Teacher Education programs.

4. Moving Forward

4.A. Student Success Strategy

The Student Success Executive Council is planning a communications strategy to roll out the BYU Student Success vision and guiding principles across campus (as described in section

2.C.4). This is anticipated to begin in spring 2025. The council acknowledges that achieving the stated vision requires consistent employee engagement and messaging.

In addition to the three current priority areas mentioned above, BYU has planned efforts in three additional areas to enhance student success. These include:

(1) Enhance the Academic Support system to support students with an academic standing notation on their record.
There is a lag between when a student has a registration hold placed on their account due to academic performance and when they are required to seek help. Students who earn below a 2.0 GPA have a registration hold placed on their accounts after the add/drop deadline of the next semester or term they are enrolled in. This means that a student can complete an entire additional semester before being required to seek assistance. For example, if a student earns below a 2.0 during the fall semester, the registration hold does not impact winter class registration because winter registration occurs before the fall grade posting. Consequently, a student can reasonably register for classes and complete the winter semester without being required to get any support and may face the same lack of academic success again winter semester. While the registration calendar cannot be altered, the university leadership can explore other ways to ensure these students connect with an advisor earlier.

(2) Improve the process for providing evidence of student achievement of learning outcomes ("closing the loop") by using the new program stewardship review process. This was discussed in section 3.C.

(3) Complete a comprehensive study of the BYU student experience and examine relevant policies.
The Office of Assessment and Planning is leading the development of a study strategy to identify what contributes to a quality academic experience, as defined by the BYU Aims. This will include triangulating existing, secondary, and new primary data collected from BYU students.

4.B. Student Success Strategy Accountability & Metrics

One of the next key steps for the student success strategy is to establish and formalize reporting lines of accountability and metrics to measure achievement in our priority areas, as discussed in section 2.C.4. When the Student Success Executive Council presented to the Dean's Council, the deans were asked to identify what actions they would take this year concerning the three "asks" and include those action items in their annual strategic plan submitted with resource planning in May 2025. They were also asked to identify the metrics they would use to measure progress in these areas. Similarly, the advisement community was asked to determine the metrics they would use to assess success.

4.C. New General Education Program

(NWCCU Standard 1.C.6)

BYU leadership has engaged in campus-wide discussions about re-designing general education (GE) for several years. The academic vice president is getting closer to having a proposal for

consideration by the Board of Trustees to obtain their approval. While still under development, the following two principles undergird the envisioned GE program: (1) mission-centric, and (2) bold, distinct, and simple.

The new GE is anchored in BYU's inspired mission and "bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel."[4] BYU leadership is creating a general education that promotes "the balanced development of the total person," fosters "the full realization of human potential," and cultivates "those moral virtues which characterize the life and teachings of the Son of God."[5]

BYU administration envisions a simple and lean GE—universal in its reach, common for all students, and focused "on a relatively small number of very significant offerings."[6] It will be designed to be truly general— a centripetal core common to all students, with no substitutions or double-counting.[7] In the GE development, leaders are applying lessons learned from Univ 101, including lessons about the primacy of pedagogy and the power of smaller sections. Core classes will focus on quantitative reasoning, effective communication, constitutional government, natural sciences, human flourishing, and languages, tongues, and people. Common learning outcomes will be established for each of these core classes.

4.D. Second-Year Success

In the summer of 2024, the Office of First-Year Experience initiated a second-year success program to help targeted students persevere through their second year at BYU. The Office of First-Year Experience used Early Alert data to identify 300 students at high or medium-high risk of not graduating and who would start their third semester in fall 2024. These students were invited to work with a peer "guide" throughout their second year to achieve goals in four areas: (1) academic success, (2) faculty connection, (3) major clarification, and (4) experiential learning. One of the priorities of the second-year peer guides is to help second-year students connect with faculty in their college or department, as well as to connect with advisement resources in their area (or university advisement if they have not yet selected a major). Of the 300 invited, approximately 100 students chose to participate actively. An additional 25 students participated in an overnight "basecamp" before the fall 2024 semester. Each student went through a pre-semester diagnostic with a guide to help set benchmarks for setting goals. During this initial pilot, participants met with their peer guide an average of about twice a month. The Office of First-Year Experience will continue these efforts and assess its effectiveness.

4.E. Program Stewardship Review

Based on pilot user feedback and recommendations from the Academic Vice President's Office, the annual program stewardship review (as described in section 3.C) and associated web interface will continue evolving to support a high-quality program review process. CTL will continue to develop and enhance the annual program stewardship review system to streamline data gathering and evaluation and to facilitate faculty participation in program improvement. Additionally, the CTL remains committed to supporting programs that have not yet adopted the program stewardship review system by providing dedicated resources and assistance as they

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[4] Spencer W. Kimball. Education for Eternity. Sept 12, 1967.
[5] BYU Mission.
[6] Jeffrey R. Holland. A School in Zion. August 22, 1988.
[7] Justin Collings. Believe in Him to Come. August 26, 2024

transition. As noted earlier, BYU leadership anticipates that the program stewardship review will be fully adopted by the 2026-2027 academic year.

5. Addenda

BYU had two recommendations during its spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness.

> Recommendation 1: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Demonstrate an ongoing and systematic institutional level process to assess student achievement and support services in order to refine its effectiveness, assign resources, and improve student learning and achievement. (2020 Standard(s) 1.B.1)
>
> Recommendation 2: Spring 2022 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness - Align disaggregated indicators of student achievement with meaningful, institutionally identified indicators, and demonstrate that they are used for continuous improvement to inform planning, decision making, and allocation of resources in a transparent way that informs strategies to allocate resources to mitigate perceived gaps in achievement and equity. (2020 Standard(s) 1.D.3; 1.D.4)

We have addressed our response to these recommendations in the sections above.

The following is a summary of the more recent actions taken and the resources BYU leaders have assigned and allocated to improving student learning and achievement. This list is not exhaustive because, as stated in the BYU student success vision statement (see section 2.C.1), every BYU employee is part of the student success strategy. Everyone is asked to invest.

- Three members of the President's Council (student life vice president, belonging vice president and assistant to the president for assessment and planning), the associate academic vice president for undergraduate studies, a dean, an associate dean (a former department chair), and the senior associate athletic director all serve as active members of the Student Success Executive Council.
- The associate dean of undergraduate education and a 1.5 FTE support the UNIV 101 BYU Foundations for Student Success course.
- 320 full-time, tenured faculty teach the UNIV 101 course–this is an overload assignment for many of them.
- The Office of First-Year Experience has an assistant dean and seven staff members supervising peer mentors' work.
- Enrollment Services employees provide advising services for all newly admitted students. Enrollment Services employees also manage the Early Alert system tool.
- The student to advisor ratio is 138 to 1.[8]
- The University Curriculum Council has subcommittees whose student success work is described in section 2.C.2 comprises associate deans from each academic college and leaders of other academic and academic support units (registrar, library, Student Development Services, Educator Preparation Program, and Graduate Studies).

[8] This is based on a 2022 analysis of academic and co-curricular advisors

- There is a full-time director of the Office of First-Year Experience and an FTE dedicated to the second-year experience.
- Nearly 200 peer mentors were hired to support UNIV 101 sections and provide ongoing support in students' second semester.
- The university provides all faculty who teach UNIV 101 with nine hours of training on best practices for teaching first-year students. Every faculty member who completes the training receives $1,000 in their research account.
- Every faculty member who taught UNIV 101 received $100 for use during their class, including but not limited to the option of providing a dinner in the faculty member's home.
- The Office of Assessment and Planning hired a data scientist with specific responsibilities for graduating data modeling and other research projects related to understanding what contributes to student success, including predictors of graduation rates. These efforts complement the work of other Assessment and Planning and Enrollment Services employees who provide ongoing data for our monitoring efforts.
- The Office of Assessment and Planning has 1.75 FTE, which has the lead responsibility for creating and maintaining all the data dashboards.
- The Center for Teaching and Learning has employees dedicated to developing the new program stewardship review platform.

Appendicies not included in this on-line version