

*"The simplest and most practical lesson I know . . . is to resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow."  
--Catherine McAuley in a letter 28 February 1841*

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Mercyhurst University is an accredited, not-for-profit, four-year, Catholic liberal arts institution. Originally founded as Mercyhurst College by the Sisters of Mercy in 1926, the university was chartered in 1928, enrolled its first coeducational class in 1969, opened its first graduate program in 1978, and is now considered a *Master's College & University: Medium Program* by the Carnegie Classification system.

The Sisters of Mercy, whose roots can be traced to Mother Catherine McAuley who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin, Ireland, have always committed their lives and works to serving those who are poor, sick, and uneducated. This commitment, as well as the Sisters' of Mercy fourth vow of service, has always been central to the mission and values of Mercyhurst University. A Mercyhurst education aims at engaging students for life and at creating leaders in justice and service.

Mercyhurst University is located in Erie, Pennsylvania, overlooking Lake Erie. The University enjoys the advantages of a suburban setting only minutes from the downtown area of the City of Erie. Erie, located in northwestern Pennsylvania, is the largest city in that part of the Commonwealth and is the fourth largest city overall in Pennsylvania. Erie is approximately equidistant (two hours driving time or less) from the cities of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Cleveland, Ohio; and Buffalo, New York. Mercyhurst University currently operates two additional locations in inner-city Erie and also in rural Corry, PA. Mercyhurst Dungarvan in Ireland serves as an instructional site. In addition, a branch campus situated in North East, PA housed the university's associate degree programs from 1991 until 2021, when the campus will be closed and all programs will move to the main campus.

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Mercyhurst University seeks to be a leading higher educational institution that integrates excellence in the liberal arts, professional and career-path programs, and service to regional and world communities.

Consistent with its Catholic identity and Mercy heritage, Mercyhurst University educates women and men in a culture where faith and reason flourish together, where the beauty and power of the liberal arts combine with an appreciation for the dignity of work and a commitment to serving others. Confident in the strength of its student-

Intellectually creative,

*Generous, inquiring, and critical habits of mind, which support the aspirations for excellence manifested within the academic community, encourage us in our lifelong search for what is true, good, and beautiful.*

Reflectively aware,

*Our Christian environment encourages self-reflection and contemplation of human behavior, promotes balance of mind, body, and spirit, and ultimately offers the opportunity to develop a moral compass for a life of integrity.*

Ambassadors of service.

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Consistent with the tradition of the institution, Mercyhurst University is strongly committed to providing each student with an education grounded in the liberal arts. Along with the commitment to the liberal arts, the University offers signature academic programs that enable students to develop competitive job skills in high demand areas. The following sections describe the academic offerings at the institution.

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The current iteration of the general education curriculum, REACH, provides students with a broad-based education that is grounded in the Mercy mission. The courses in this experience are designed to challenge mindsets and assumptions, enable the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, encourage curiosity and creative inquiry, cultivate an appreciation of arts and culture, ignite community awareness and engagement, and help instill in the students a resilience in the face of challenges.

The REACH curriculum is comprised of the following parts:

- An introduction to academic writing and thought, as well as to college life.

This experience requires the foundational research/writing/composition course, as well as two one-credit courses to help ease the transition from high school to college and introduce students to the mission and values of the institution.

- A series of ten courses in ten different disciplines across five different themes. This experience provides students with the opportunity to ensure a breadth of knowledge across the liberal arts while also ensuring flexibility for productive degree pathways.

- A true capstone experience, with one shared Ethics Capstone course for all students at the institution, as well as a designated capstone experience within the major programs.

- a credit-based service experience that is designed to have students meaningfully engage with *others* and then complete a series of guided reflections that promote putting the Mercy Mission into action in other experiences.

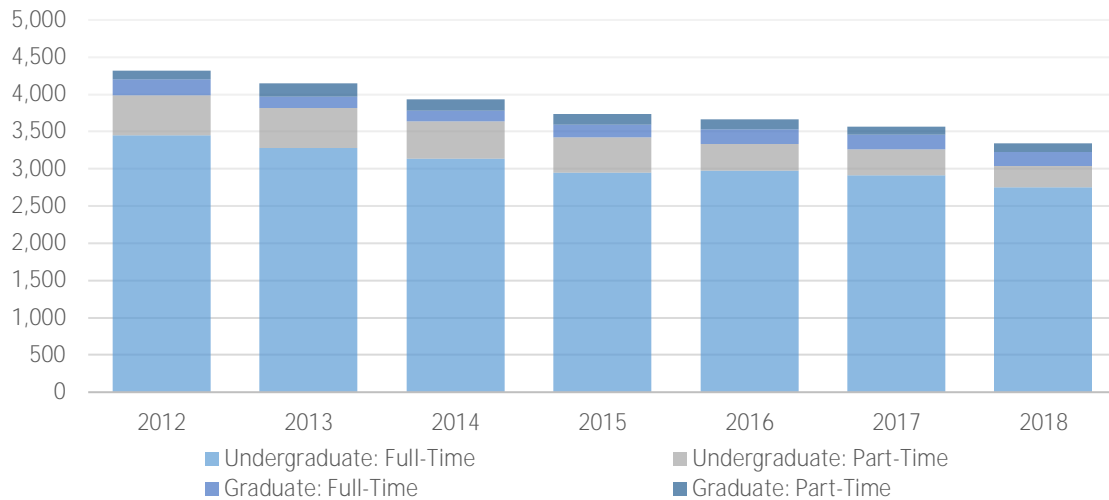
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The University furnishes students with opportunities for gaining pertinent knowledge and skills necessary for lasting success in a career and for making meaningful contributions to society. In addition to a variety of undergraduate programs, the University offers graduate programs leading to a Master of Science degree in the Administration of Justice, Special Education, Secondary Education, Organizational Leadership, Physician's Assistant Studies, Applied Forensic Sciences, Applied Intelligence, Cyber Risk Management, Cyber Security, and Data Science.

Supporting the academic program, Mercyhurst University has a full-time faculty of 184, of whom 142 teach on the Erie Campus. Of the 142 full-time faculty on the Erie Campus, 65 have tenure and 68% hold terminal degrees. The University also employs approximately 350 staff and administrators.





Mercyhurst University continues to experience success in areas related to student achievement measures. In particular, Mercyhurst's four- and six-year graduation rates are well above the national averages for private colleges and universities. Additionally, the retention rate for full-time first-time students is on par with national averages, as shown in Figure 2.

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Some differences can be identified when the data is disaggregated between baccalaureate and associate level. While the traditional four-year program remains strong, there has been some decrease in student success measured in the two-year programs. Though the trend is similar at other institutions, this is a contributing factor to the on-going conversations about the future success of the North East branch campus.

Since the last Middle States Accreditation process that was finalized in 2014, Mercyhurst University has had significant change in leadership with a new administration installed in August 2015. In contrast to the prior administration, the new administration prioritized robust planning, analysis, and financial forecasting. The new administration remains focused on professionalism, accountability, data-driven decision-



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As part of the process for the university's latest strategic plan, entitled "Mission Inspired. Future Ready," to begin in 2020 and continue to 2023, the steering committee for the strategic plan conducted

Serving others;  
leadership in service  
Student-faculty  
bonds

| | X | |

X

STANDARD V:  
EDUCATIONAL  
EFFECTIVENESS  
ASSESSMENT

How does Mercyhurst ensure  
the effectiveness of all





|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Dr. Joseph Morris    | Chair, Political Science Department and<br>Associate Professor of Political Science |
| Mr. Ivan Palikuca    | System and Domain Administrator   |
| Ms. Michelle Simpson |   |



|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| STANDARD VII:<br>GOVERNANCE,<br>LEADERSHIP, AND<br>ADMINISTRATION |   |   | X |
| Compliance  | X | X | X |

Each Working Group for the seven standards and compliance were provided with a set of relevant to that Working Group in an initial face-to-face meeting between Steering Committee members and the chairs of the eight Working Groups. Each Working Group received a charge that contained information specific to their task as well as information relevant to the other Working Groups.



Working Group for STANDARD  
VII: GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP,  
AND ADMINISTRATION

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Each Working Group is charged with helping to gather the information that will form the basis of the final self-study report, and to draft

The final Self-Study Report will be organized by chapter. Initial chapters will provide an overview of the process and institution. Subsequent chapters will be organized by Standard, with each Standard-focus chapter containing an overview, summary of findings, analysis, improvements, and innovations. Each chapter will also have an appendix that contains links to the appropriate documents in the Evidence Inventory. The document will conclude with a final chapter that summarizes the key findings and highlights improvements and innovations across the institution.

- I. Table of Contents
- II. Executive Summary
- III. Institutional Overview
- IV.

The Steering Committee carefully and purposefully selected Working Group members from across a variety of campus offices and units. Working Group members were chosen based on their knowledge of federal regulations, accreditation standards, and other requirements related to compliance. The Working Group consists of the following individuals:

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Ms. Alice Agnew, Co-chair | Title IX Coordinator and Director of Equal Opportunity Programs |
| Ms. Amy Danzer, Co-chair  | Accreditation Coordinator                                       |
| Ms. Merry Bollheimer, JD  | General Counsel and Vice President for Legal Affairs            |
| Mr. Donald Fuhrmann       | Chief of Police/Director of Public Safety                       |

- ◁ Mercyhurst is a Mercy Institution, a Catholic Institution founded by a religious order (as opposed to Diocesan), and a historically women’s college with a deep and meaningful connection between the founders and our identity.
- ◁ Mercyhurst is predominantly an undergraduate institution with strong graduate and associate programs, deeply grounded in the liberal arts tradition, and includes several progressive and modern niche programs.
- ◁ Mercyhurst is a private, residential, and coeducational institution that is tuition dependent and financially constrained with an endowment of approximately \$30 million.

Mercyhurst has a strong preference for a chair who understands well our sector and the distinctive history, practices, culture, community, and markets within which selective liberal arts colleges operate. Mercyhurst also seeks an individual on the team with CFO experience who can offer guidance to continue our good financial progress.

Mercyhurst requests that Peer Evaluation Team members not be from institutions within a 30-mile radius of Mercyhurst. There are potential conflicts of interest with the following institutions: Duquesne University (PA), Maria College (NY), Army War College (PA), Trocaire College (NY), Lake Erie College (OH), Louisburg College (NC), and St. Bonaventure University (NY).

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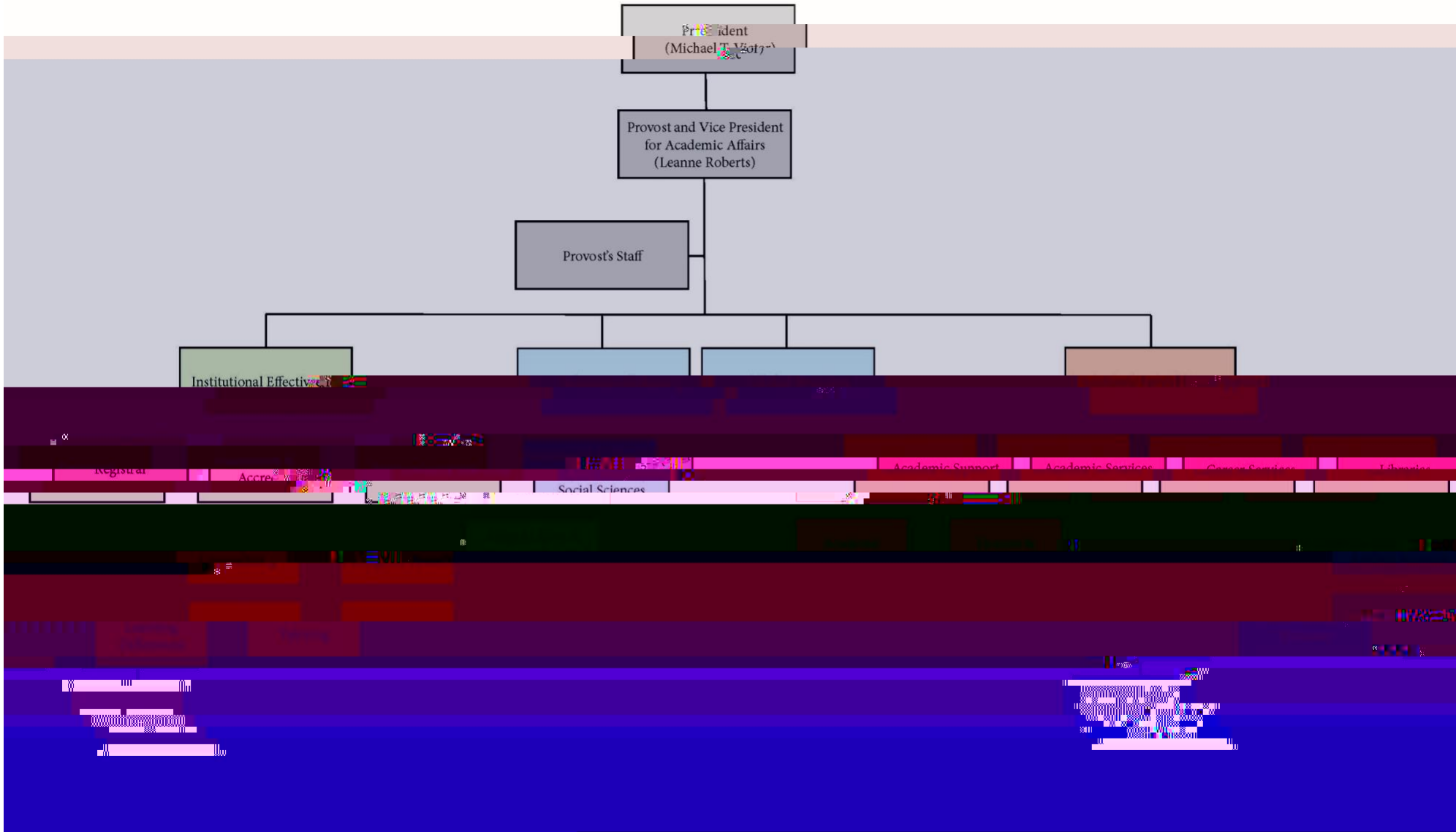
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The Evidence Inventory will be a master list of all documents and supporting materials that are identified as supporting the Self-Study. In order to most thoughtfully and thoroughly construct the Evidence Inventory, it will first take the shape of a list of documents compil

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|--|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthropology/Archaeology</li> <li>Art</li> <li>Art Therapy</li> <li>Catholic Studies</li> <li>Dance</li> <li>Education</li> <li>English</li> <li>Graphic Design</li> <li>History</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberal Arts</li> <li>Music</li> <li>Philosophy</li> <li>Psychology</li> <li>Religious Studies</li> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>World Languages</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberal Arts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anthropology</li> <li>Special Education</li> <li>Secondary Education</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied Behavioral Analysis</li> <li>Autism</li> <li>Early Childhood (Specialized hildhoc</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>Art (PK-12)<br/>Autism Endorsement (PK-12)<br/>Biology (7-12)<br/>Chemistry (7-12)<br/>Earth &amp; Space Science (7-12)<br/>English (7-12)<br/>English as a Second Language (PK-12)</p> <p>Dance (BA)</p> <p>Music (BA)<br/>Music Education (BM)</p> <p>Music Therapy (BM)</p> | <p>French (PK-12)<br/>General Science (7-12)<br/>Grades PK-12)<br/>Instructional Coach Endorsement (PK-12)<br/>Mathematics (7-12)<br/>Music (PK-12)<br/>Online Instructional Program Endorsement (PK-12)</p> <p>Dance Pedagogy (BA)</p> <p>Music Composition (BM)<br/>Music Therapy (BM)</p> | <p>Physics (7-12)<br/>Skills for Teacher Leaders Endorsement (PK-12)<br/>Social Studies (7-12)<br/>Spanish (PK-12)<br/>Special Education (PK-8)<br/>Theatre Endorsement</p> <p>Dance (BFA)</p> <p>Music Performance (BM)</p> |
|  | <p>Social Work (BA)</p>   |  |  |

Accounting (BA)  
Business Economics (BA)

Marketing (BA)



| 2019  | August                                   |  | Steering Committee Chair Identified  |   |  |
|-------|--|--|--|---|--|
|       | September                                |  | Steering Committee Members Identified<br>Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting                       |   |  |
|       | October                                  | Self-Study Institute   | <i>Draft of Timeline and Communication Plan<br/>Serve as Liaisons to Work Groups<br/>Draft SSD</i> |   |  |
|       | November                                 |  |  | First meeting with Work Group Chairs    |  |
|       | December                                 |  |  | Work Group Kick-Off meetings            |  |
|       | January                                  |  |  | <i>Work Groups carrying out charges</i> |  |
|       | February                                 |  |  |   |  |
|       | March                                    |  | <i>SSD Revisions</i>   |   |  |
| April | Self-Study Prep Visit with MSCHE Liaison | <i>Continue as Liaisons to Work Groups and<br/>University Stakeholders</i> | <i>Work Groups carrying out charges</i>  |   |  |

2020

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|  | July      |   | <i>Liaisons with Writers and University Stakeholders</i>           |  |  |
|  | August    |   |  |  |  |
|  | September |   | <i>Prepare for and participate in Team Chair Preliminary Visit</i> | <i>Prepare for and participate in Team Chair Preliminary Visit</i> | <i>Prepare for and participate in Team Chair Preliminary Visit</i> |
|  | October   | Team Chair Preliminary Visit  |  |  |  |
|  | November  |   | <i>Prepare Community for the Evaluation Team Visit</i>             |  | <i>Finalize Report based on Team Chair Guidance</i>                |
|  | December  |   |  |  |  |
|  | January   |   |  |  |  |
|  | February  |   |  |  |  |
|  | March     | Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit<br>Team Report<br>Institutional Response | <i>Participate in Evaluation Team Visit and related processes</i>  | <i>Participate in Evaluation Team Visit and related processes</i>  | <i>Participate in Evaluation Team Visit and related processes</i>  |

2022



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|  |  |  | related to their standard, where this evidence can be found, and what gaps are missing in the data. The interim reports will be posted to the Hub and external website so that all constituents may offer feedback and suggestions. | Website<br>Newsletter Notification   | X | X | X | X | X |
|  |  |  | The Self-Study Design will be posted in draft form by comments from all constituents. This includes the institutional priorities, intended outcomes, timeline, and communication plan.  | Email notification to all employees and students<br>Reports placed on HUB          | X | X | X |   |   |
|  |  |  |   | Website<br>Newsletter Notification<br>Email notification to constituents<br>Survey | X | X | X | X | X |
|  |  |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |

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|  |  |  | Work Group Final Reports will serve as the final summary of the evidence as collected, analyzed, and interpreted by the Work Groups. In these reports, Work Groups will also identify any areas where evidence could not be identified. The steering committee will post these results to the Hub and external website so that all constituents have an opportunity to provide feedback. | Email notification to all employees and students<br>Reports placed on HUB | X | X | X |   |   |  |
|  |  |  |  | Website<br>Newsletter Notification  | X | X | X | X | X |  |
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|  |  | Team Chair Preliminary Visit |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|  |  |                              | Feedback from the Preliminary Visit by the Team Chair will be shared, as appropriate, with all constituents. This will help the campus community prepare for the full Team Visit. | Email notification to all employees and students<br>Reports placed on HUB | x | x | x |   |  |
|  |  |                              |   | Website<br>Newsletter Notification  | x | x | x | x |  |



