



A. ENHANCING ACADEMIC QUALITY

Overview

Administrators and faculty are committed to quality in the academic programs, and to evidence-based decision-making in support of academic quality; a commitment expressed in action as well as in policy. This essay presents evidence that the University has established and effectively assesses student learning outcomes; that the academic programs are effective in educating students, and that both the institution and its programs make appropriate use of data in decisions to enhance pedagogy and curricula. The essay concludes with an analysis of the state of the culture of evidence, and with recommendations. Evidence is provided to support CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2 2.3 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 2.10, 2.12, 3.3, 3.11, 4.6 and 4.7.

Developing a Culture of Evidence

The commitment to assessment is articulated in Article IV of the Rules, Regulations and Procedures Manual (EEF III.A.1). With academic quality designated as one of four strategic initiatives, faculty leaders embraced assessment of learning outcomes, provided faculty development opportunities, and established guidelines for academic program review that require ongoing assessment and improvement of instruction. Specific goals included program reviews that documented support for student learning; defined student learning outcomes and assessment methods; and dissemination of information on actions taken to improve pedagogy and curricula, along with the evidence in support of these actions. In 2006, the WASC Capacity and Preparatory Visit team noted both progress and continuing challenges in strengthening academic quality through assessment. The team recommended the hire of an Assessment Coordinator and Institutional Researcher, now completed. This person leads a reconstituted Assessment Committee, which includes the chairs of college and school assessment committees as well as the chair of the General Education Review Committee. The Committee is guided by a five-year plan with an annual \$100,000 budget devoted to assessment.

The WASC team made several additional recommendations specific to academic quality. The team required that academic programs "complete the process of developing statements of assessable learning outcomes, linking these to specific courses, assessing students' achievement of these outcomes as graduating seniors, and using assessment results for continuous program improvement." This was determined to mean including program-wide learning outcomes as well as course-specific outcomes in course syllabi; revising program review guidelines to provide clearer and more detailed descriptions of the kinds of assessment and documentation to be provided by departments; examining academic programs in terms of majors, number of faculty, and contributions to the mission, community and regional needs; and reviewing the quality of graduate programs, with special attention to administrative support. While several areas are still developing, continuing efforts to enhance academic quality by systematically acquiring and appropriately responding to assessment data have produced results as documented below.

Evidence: Learning Objectives, Assessment Plans and Systems for Reviewing Assessment Results

The 2006 CPR self-study identified challenges in establishing standards and systems for gathering data on academic quality, and for making these data available to program faculty and administrators. This section documents the degree to which the challenges have been met. Specifically, faculty and administrators have (a) established learning objectives at the level of the institution, and well-aligned learning objectives for the colleges, schools and academic programs; (b) aligned curricula and pedagogy with established learning objectives; (c) collected multiple direct assessments of these learning outcomes; and (d) established regular and systematic procedures for reviewing and improving academic programs, based in part on evaluations of assessment data.



Established Learning Objectives

Institutional Learning Objectives

In 2004, an internal review, *Institutional Values and Qualities of the Ideal Student*, clarified SLOs and related standards of evidence. A summary of these goals, which include enhancing students' abilities to master and create global and regional knowledge, and preparing students for service to regional communities, appears in EEF III.A.2. The Assessment Committee updates these goals and determines whether colleges and program SLOs align with the institutional goals.

The General Education (GE) committee developed outcomes, using the institutional values information, and documented them in the Undergraduate Catalog and the Criteria Manual for General Education Categories (EEF III.A.3). The GE program provides students with an understanding of the fundamentals of major fields of knowledge and teaches them to frame questions about purpose in life; historical, geographical, political, and economic contributors to current events and conditions; relationships between individuals and societies, appropriate uses of science and technology, and improvements to self and society. The Criteria Manual for GE Categories lists ten assessable learning outcomes for students, including the ability to interpret and use quantitative information; describe the aesthetic significance of an object or experience; organize, analyze and communicate information using computers; and use appropriate methods for observing and interpreting natural and social phenomena. More detailed statements of category-specific SLOs appear in the Undergraduate Catalog.

Learning Objectives for Colleges and Schools

SLOs have been established for each college or school, and are published in the Undergraduate Catalog.

- *The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.* CLASS includes knowledge of regional cultural traditions, social and economic development, and qualitative and scientific content and methods.
- *The College of Natural and Applied Sciences.* CNAS includes a culture of partnership and relevant science programs. Each of the College's undergraduate programs lists learning objectives in the Catalog, which include fostering skills in critical thinking and problem solving, communication, and community engagement.
- *The School of Business and Public Administration.* SBPA includes critical thinking, social responsibility, strategic thinking, teamwork, and respect for diversity.
- *The School of Nursing and Health Sciences.* SNHS includes ethical practice, research skills, communication skills, cultural competence and professional growth.
- *The School of Education.* SOE includes mastery of topic-specific content and of pedagogy.

Learning Objectives for Degree Programs

SLOs for individual degree programs appear in the Undergraduate Catalog, Graduate Bulletin, program review documentation, and the Qualitative Review reports submitted by each program to the Senior Vice-President in 2007. These reports describe how programs' goals align with the objectives and initiatives identified in the Reaccreditation Proposal.

- *CLASS Programs.* Eight of the thirteen undergraduate academic programs and all four graduate programs publish SLOs in the Undergraduate Catalog and the Graduate Bulletin, respectively. These objectives vary from general goals involving initiative and content mastery to operationally defined objectives derived from, or aligned with, nationwide standards. The remaining seven programs will submit SLOs during Spring Semester 2009. The CLASS Curriculum Committee



oversees the development and review of SLOs in course outlines, and their alignment with college objectives.

- *CNAS Programs.* All seven programs publish SLOs in the Catalog or Bulletin. The CNAS Assessment Committee supervises the development and regularly reviews SLOs for all course outlines and learner-centered syllabi.
- *SBPA Programs.* The four undergraduate and two graduate programs publish SLOs in the Catalog or Bulletin. An Assurance of Learning Committee reviews all syllabi and assessment data to ensure achievement of stated goals. Outcome assessment is conducted continuously and reported annually to the BBA accreditation body International Association of Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). Finally, SLOs are reviewed annually by the School's faculty and stakeholders for assurance of relevancy and achievement.
- *SNHS Programs.* Both undergraduate programs publish SLOs in the Catalog. The Nursing Program detailed its SLOs in a Program Evaluation Plan (EEF III.A.4) submitted to the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission.
- *SOE Programs.* Each of the undergraduate and graduate programs publishes SLOs in the Catalog or Bulletin, and submits objectives and assessment results to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). A curriculum committee reviews all courses and programs.

Learning Objectives for Courses

Majority of the courses have SLOs and conduct regular assessment of these outcomes. Objectives for individual courses appear in approved course outlines and in course syllabi on file with the college or school. They are distributed to all students. A summary of SLOs in course outlines appears in EEF III.A.5. A subsequent section of this essay provides evidence that the University bases decisions on assessment data, and provides a summary of data on and changes in the syllabi.

Assessment Plans

This section summarizes evidence that programs regularly assess their SLOs and use the results to improve learning.

Institutional Reviews

Under the Senior Vice-President's supervision, the Assessment Coordinator/Institutional Researcher works with college and school assessment committees to review assessment plans. She supplies individual programs annually with data such as credit hour production, numbers of declared majors and students' academic standing. Mandatory, institution-wide, quinquennial program reviews provide regular opportunities for evaluation of each program's assessment plan. Appendix 5 summarizes completed program reviews.

Reviews at the Level of Colleges and Schools

- *CLASS.* Faculty members regularly include multi-year course assessment plans in their annual Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System (CFES) reports and plans. The Dean enforces documentation of assessment of learning outcomes as an integral part of program reviews. The college received a \$70,000 sub-grant from Project HÁTSA (US DOE funded to Guam Public School System, addressing the quality of teacher preparation) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of SLOs among students preparing to be secondary education English teachers.
- *CNAS.* The College Assessment Committee and its subcommittees supervise the development of program-specific assessment plans, including summaries of results to date and evidence to be collected in future assessments: reporting each to the Dean. Individual faculty members also present their assessment plans during their annual CFES reviews.



- SBPA. Instructors for all courses conduct pre- and post-course assessments and report the results to the School and to the International Association of Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). In addition, undergraduate programs in Business Administration Criminal Justice and Public Administration, and its Master's programs in Public Administration and Business Administration, have developed and implemented program-wide assessment plans. The Business Administration undergraduate program has also implemented a nationally standardized comprehensive business examination that is required of all graduating seniors in the program.
- SNHS. The School Curriculum Committee developed the classroom assessment component of Nursing's Program Evaluation Plan, as submitted to NLNAC: which requires a systematic plan for assessing both required and optional student outcomes. In addition, the Committee supervises annual assessments of learning outcomes, with results disseminated to all faculty members for review and action.
- SOE. The School Assessment Committee developed a six-step assessment plan template that makes use of rubric-based evaluation instruments, LiveText-based assessment portfolios to monitor the developing capabilities of individual students, and clearly designed standards required of students at the initial, midway and final stages of their programs.

Detailed information on specific assessment methods in use within each program, and of results and actions from analysis of assessments, will be provided in the poster session scheduled for the Site Visit team on April 1, 2009.

Systems for Evidence-based Action

This section summarizes evidence that assessment data guide decisions on pedagogy and curricula.

Institutional Systems

Program reviews. Reports on the status of program assessment within each school and college document progress in closing the loop with assessment-enabled improvements to programs. To date, five programs in CLASS, one in CNAS, three in SBPA, one in SNHS, and eight in SOE, have reported assessment-based changes in pedagogy and/or curricula in their most recent program review self-studies. Examples of these actions are cited in this essay.

Based on feedback from the college and school academic affairs committees, the deans, Faculty Senate, and Senior Vice-President proposed a revision of program review guidelines, which require detailed descriptions of the assessments and documentation that programs must provide.

Analysis of undergraduate programs. Based on a review and analysis of program-specific qualitative and quantitative data, the University has begun the process of right-sizing academic programs. This was recommended in the 2007 Commission Action Letter. It is critical that recommendations on the future of academic programs be based on current and appropriate data. Accordingly, in 2007, the Senior Vice-President prepared profiles of undergraduate programs that combined quantitative data (e.g., ratios of full-time-equivalent faculty to students; graduation rates for majors) with qualitative data, with each program reporting external recognitions for quality; whether all course outlines reflect both program and course-specific SLOs, and what type of assessment plans are in place; evidence of alignment with the institutional strategic commitment to academic quality (e.g., use of capstone courses and instructional technology); and action on program review-based recommendations for improving pedagogy and curricula. This information was shared with the deans and programs. In Fall 2008, the Faculty Senate President convened an *ad hoc* committee of faculty, which reviewed the evidence and prepared recommendations. Review of these recommendations by the deans and the colleges/schools will lead to action recommendations to the President. Both the last essay in this section and EEF II.3 contain information on this review and analysis.

Qualitative review of graduate programs. The Graduate Curricula Review Committee (GCRC) recommends policies, standards and procedures for the graduate programs, coordinates faculty input on



graduate program reviews, and reviews proposals for substantive changes in existing/new graduate programs and courses to the administration via the Faculty Senate. The graduate program analysis will follow the same pattern as the undergraduate analysis, but with greater emphasis on qualitative data. The GCRC and the Senate Committee on Institutional Excellence are currently conducting this review. In order to include input from the Assistant Vice President, this review will occur in Spring Semester 2009.

Systems by College and School

The colleges and schools review assessment evidence in annual CFES evaluation meeting with faculty members. This includes discussions of actions taken to address needs identified in assessment results. Professional accreditation bodies also require assessment plans and actions in response to the results as elements of each review. The Education, Social Work, Business, and Nursing programs have current professional and academic accreditation with their respective bodies. SOE received initial accreditation by NCATE in 2007, with a focused review in March 2009, just before the WASC visit to review assessment plans, results, and actions.

A particular example of the use of data is the development of a Certificate in Entrepreneurship and a new concentration in Entrepreneurship for the Bachelors of Business Administration. Information on these new programs appears in EEF.III.A.7.

Analysis of the Evidence

The University has largely achieved the 2004 Proposal's goals of defining SLOs and integrating assessment data with program reviews. Support and review of assessment plans and activities occur at the program, college/school and institutional levels. The colleges, schools and programs report during yearly budget cycles on the alignment of their respective SLOs with those of the institution. The University Assessment Committee then reviews learning objectives at three levels—institutional, college and program—in order to validate the alignment.

The Assessment Committee uses program reviews to gather information about the variety and types of assessments within each program and to determine the degree to which programs have moved beyond student self-reports and pre- and posttests of concept mastery to authentic, performance-based methods. The Committee also provides direction and training opportunities to support faculty work in assessment and works closely with the General Education Review Committee to ensure that appropriate assessments are conducted on GE outcomes, with actions taken in response.

The Assessment Officer / Institutional Researcher has developed a web site to disseminate the results of program reviews and track the progress of reviews. One challenge is to streamline and automate the process via web-based applications, so that faculty use their time and energy in the most productive way possible. The Assessment Committee is currently considering how to respond to this challenge.

Do Students Demonstrate Learning at Levels Established by External Standards?

Institutional Policies on External Standards

The University encourages all degree programs to link assessments to standards established by appropriate national and international professional organizations. Results have been positive, especially in the professional schools. In addition, the program review system encourages benchmarking with similar programs at other universities, and requires that each program be evaluated by one or more expert external reviewer (Program Review Handbook in EEF III.A.8)

Examples. This section presents examples of programs using externally recognized, discipline-specific standards to assess the quality of student learning.



- Business Administration faculty assess students' global awareness (a program SLO) with pre- and post tests in BA341 International Business Environment. Results revealed substantial improvements in students' global awareness after taking the course and parity with benchmarks from students in New York and Pennsylvania who completed the same tests at the same level.
- Chemistry faculty assess students' mastery of learning outcomes using a standardized examination developed and validated by the American Chemical Society, noting that average student scores compare favorably with national averages.
- Nursing faculty assess students' mastery of content at the end of each clinically based theory course, using tests developed and validated by the NLN. Students typically perform well on these tests, with the majority passing the tests on the first administration, and substantial percentages achieving perfect scores.
- To maintain NCATE accreditation, Education faculty demonstrate that graduates meet national standards of content mastery and proficiency on the Educational Testing Service's Pre-Professional Skills Tests and content-specific PRAXIS II examinations.
- Programs that offer opportunities for service learning and/or internships frequently rely on evaluations by field work supervisors to assess their students' performance. Supervisors' evaluations of students in AG498 Special Projects in Agriculture, PY492a-b Psychology Practicum, and SW385 - 485 Field Instruction I-II have documented the high quality of student performance.
- Admission to graduate programs or to professional study provides another index of program effectiveness. The Student Success essay provides examples.

Do Students Demonstrate Learning at Levels Set by the Program?

Assessments of SLOs make use of standards developed within programs in response to the specific needs of the University's student population and the region. This section presents representative examples.

- In the Consumer and Family Sciences program (CFS), tests conducted in 2008 compared freshmen and sophomores in CFS courses with graduating seniors, assessing the seniors' gains in and overall mastery of course material in 16 content areas identified by the CFS faculty. The results demonstrated reliable gains, strong retention and high mean scores in all 16 areas.
- Business Administration faculty developed pre- and post tests in two specific courses in the BBA Economics concentration, BA110 Principles of Economics and BA322 Personal Financial Planning, producing evidence of student improvement in economic and personal finance literacy.
- In BA110 Principles of Economics, a pre-/post-test measures students' achievements of two program learning goals: to demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills; and competence in functional areas of economics and finance. Comparisons of 28 students completing BA110 with performance by students in two other studies—a large-scale study of over 1000 students in a comparable course (Markow & Bagnaschi, 2005), and a study of 32 students in a comparable course at Alfred University— indicated a lower mean score, 14.6 (with a standard deviation of 3.45) for the University's sample, than the researchers observed in their own samples, at 17.28 and 18.06, respectively. Faculty used this information to strengthen course content and include more group discussions in the syllabus.
- While not all results are positive, any negative results are used to guide positive changes in programs. Pre- and post tests conducted in MA165 Pre-calculus indicated that entering students had weak algebra skills, and had not improved these skills by course end. As a result, the prerequisites for this course were improved and a new, accelerated course added to prepare



students for MA 165. Math faculty will repeat the assessment next year, evaluating changes in both pedagogy and curriculum.

Closing the Loop: Data-Based Decisions that Strengthen Academic Quality

This section presents evidence that colleges, programs and faculty respond appropriately and systematically to assessment data. Examples demonstrate that programs regularly revise curricula based on the results of assessments; that assessments of SLOs lead to reflection and deliberation-based revisions of pedagogy; and that formal reviews of academic programs lead to institution-wide and program-specific actions and improvements.

Action Based on Program Reviews

In 2008, the Senior Vice-President released an analysis of responses to all recommendations emerging from the program review process over three years. The analysis indicated that 59% of all recommendations emerging from program reviews were implemented, with a further 31% pending implementation. Of the remaining 10% of program review-based recommendations not implemented or scheduled, 71% were awaiting action by the faculty, while 21% were not implemented due to funding, infrastructure needs or staff/technical support.

College- or school-wide percentages of undergraduate programs making recommendations based on the results of assessment data ranged from a high of 100% for the School of Education to a low of 14% for the College of Natural and Applied Sciences. Implementation rates for recommendations ranged from a high of 76% for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, to a low of 28% for the College of Natural and Applied Sciences. Although each program has its own story to tell, lack of faculty action was cited most often as reason for not implementing recommendation, with lack of resources listed next, information that supports the need for a program sustainability review. Data from program reviews are also used in the evaluations of deans and in budget preparation.

Institutional Review of Programs

Data from the quantitative and qualitative reviews of undergraduate academic programs guided recommendations by an *ad hoc* committee composed of the Assessment Coordinator / Institutional Researcher and representatives of the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee, Undergraduate Curricula Review Committee, and Standing Committee on Budget and Planning. The committee was tasked with reviewing program data, validating criteria suggested by the Senior Vice-President, and recommending one of three consequent courses of action, for each program: (1) continue and enhance; (2) combine / collaborate / change; or (3) phase out and/or eliminate. At the time of this report, the committee had submitted a report of its recommendations and finding for review by the college and school deans and academic affairs committees, and the Senior Vice-President (EEF.II.3).

The review of graduate programs now in progress will make use of a similar system for analyses and recommendations.

Evidence-based Improvements in Course Syllabi

A comparison of data gathered from 2005 and 2007 surveys of course syllabi showed quality improvements across the colleges and schools. By 2007, faculty included statements concerning students' rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, statements defining and prohibiting plagiarism, and references to how course readings relate to student learning. Areas still requiring improvement include linking the course syllabi to grading rubrics, and linking assessments to specific SLOs.



Examples of Programs Closing the Loop, By College/School

CLASS. Faculty moved from assessing critical thinking skills in GE courses to revising pedagogy and course content based on evidence of student performance in comparison with standards established by the program. Three examples follow.

- Psychology faculty aligned SLOs for individual courses with ten categories of learning outcomes recommended by the American Psychological Association for undergraduate programs. The faculty selected writing skills, critical reasoning, and knowledge of applications of psychology as program-wide priorities, which guided both internal and external assessments, and revisions of pedagogy in multiple courses. Specific skills identified as needing further emphasis include writing for scientific publication, hypothesis testing, and the ability to identify sound applications of psychological principles and data to practical problems: all of which now receive greater emphasis in required and elective courses. Feedback from community-based practicum supervisors has guided program changes in specific content knowledge on psychopathology, ethical issues, and mental health systems on Guam.
- English faculty assessed student learning in three sections of EN100 Fundamentals of College English, using a multiple-choice editing test: identifying specific areas of problems in grammatical constructs, and modifying the choice of text, and instructors' teaching strategies: to include more supervised in-class exercises. Ongoing assessments will gauge these strategies' effectiveness.
- Sociology faculty conduct pre- and post tests each semester in SO101 Introduction to Sociology. These tests identified course content requiring—and now receiving—more emphasis during the semester, as well as areas of students' greatest mastery. Also, external assessments of long-term work in Bali, Indonesia, by students and faculty in SO/AN405 Community Development resulted in improvements in course content and information to guide program planning for field schools in Indonesia for the next several years.

CNAS. The College expanded its evidence-based revisions of courses and curricula from emphasis on Mathematics and Biology to each of its eight degree programs.

- Agriculture faculty assigned to AG101 Introduction to Agriculture, AG102 Plant Biology and AG281 Principles of Horticultural Science altered course content to compensate for students' pre-test-indicated deficits in basic knowledge of the scientific method: with posttests indicating improvements. Faculty used observations from supervisors of student interns to modify selections of internship sites.
- Biology faculty acted on pre-tests of students enrolling in BI412 Biometrics indicating that students would benefit from a statistics prerequisite specific to biology, rather than a non-specific statistics course offered by the Mathematics program. A successful grant application supported development of a biology-specific statistics course for Spring 2009. Additional assessments focused on anatomy and physiology courses indicated a need to establish uniform structure, content and evaluations across multiple sections. Using a common syllabus, timetable and set of learning objectives, and hiring an adjunct instructor to supervise all six lab sections, achieved the desired standardizations of pedagogy. Faculty are now assessing the efficacy of these changes.
- Faculty assessment of other Biology courses indicated that students lacked important skills in reading and writing scientific material. Faculty secured Federal funds to develop three new required courses in scientific communication.
- Chemistry faculty used pre-tests to familiarize students in CH100 Introduction to Inorganic Chemistry and CH310 Organic Chemistry with category-based standards. Although students' competence in conducting experiments has improved, post tests indicate continued deficiencies in



solving quantitative problems: leading to more frequent feedback to students from spot quizzes. Similarly increased use of spot quizzes and frequent feedback for students in CH102/103 General Chemistry led to marked improvements in quantitative skills.

- Computer Science and Computer Information Systems faculty designed a business database system to assess students' skills. Results indicated that students needed more practice than coursework then offered in database management and user training skills. CS/CIS courses were redesigned to devote more time to these areas. Results show improvement.
- Consumer and Family Sciences faculty used their programs' 16 learning objectives to develop a comprehensive assessment of students' skills in each area: determining that coursework had eliminated lower division deficits in knowledge of clothing and textiles by the time of graduation, and that seniors' skills in each area met program standards.
- After identifying the most challenging problems covered in multiple courses, Mathematics faculty developed cooperative, faculty-supervised workshops modeled on Berkeley's Uri Triesman's *Emerging Scholars Program*. Post tests indicate improved problem-solving abilities.
- On the basis of pre- and post tests and studies of successful completion rates, Mathematics faculty made carefully designed changes in developmental Math course pedagogy, to include more teacher-focused activities such as lectures. To correct clear deficiencies in algebraic problem-solving, faculty developed a course (MA 088, offering intensive practice in intermediate algebra), which has replaced Finite Mathematics as a prerequisite for College Algebra.
- In Social Work, feedback from students in one-day retreats focused on curricula led to systematic changes in program requirements, including the addition of a course in Economics, the deletion of a Political Science requirement and the creation of a new course: Advocacy in Professional Practice. Professional field instructors supply observation-based ratings of students' specific practice skills in social service settings.

SBPA. On the basis of regular assessments, faculty identified changes in multiple courses with BA110 and BA341 International Business Environments as notable examples. Faculty conduct program assessments using external evaluations, such as a survey of the business community, conducted through the Guam Chamber of Commerce, which indicated a need to change the accounting program from a concentration to a major. This change received administrative approval and is now in place.

SOE. The School's work to improve pedagogy and curricula benefited greatly from its use of the LiveText Data Management System to compare measures professional dispositions (as assessed using faculty-completed rubric-based ratings)—i.e., pre-service attitudes, behavior, and responses to school climate settings—of students in teacher preparation programs, to national standards. Reviews of individual teacher candidates' strengths and deficiencies guide the design of interventions to strengthen each candidate's performance, and revisions of course objectives and course outlines.

SNHS. Based on assessment results that indicated that Nursing majors who completed an elective course on dosages (NU214) were more likely to pass NLN content tests, the elective course was added as a requirement for all students. The same NLN content tests provide diagnostic information on content mastery for each student. Advisors review this information with the student and suggest remedial action.

When clinical skills competency checks conducted in Nursing Practicum identified deficiencies in students' readiness to provide care to patients in clinical settings, instructors increased lab hours devoted to practicing nursing skills and adjusted schedules so that a clinical instructor would be present. As a result, all students reached competency levels and moved to the next program stage.



Summary

The University has made substantial progress toward achieving the goals for academic quality set in its 2004 Reaccreditation Proposal and in implementing the recommendations of the 2007 WASC Site Visit Team Report and Commission Action Letter. Formal, published learning objectives exist for programs, General Education, each college and school, and the University as documented in course outlines, syllabi and catalogs. Budgets, administrative structures, and faculty development activities support planning, decisions and action to enhance academic quality and decisions are based on reliable evidence, including external reviews. Faculty and administrators have undertaken a quantitative and qualitative data-based analysis of undergraduate academic programs, with the goal of "right sizing" the programs in an environment of scarce resources, and a similar review of graduate programs is underway. The University aligned administrative resources to support graduate programs, and coordinated assessment and institutional research.

The University will continue to support academic programs that have not yet linked their learning objectives to external benchmarks, or to standards identified by professional organizations.

Although the schools and colleges currently use program reviews to develop budgets in support of programs' needs, the University will consider adopting one or more established systems for strengthening the linkage between measures of quality and budgets. Dill's (2007) system for assuring academic quality, which includes the use of national examinations, academic audits and performance-based funding, provides one example.

In the next essay, the focus shifts from the definition and assessment of SLOs to the University's efforts to optimize student development, broadly considered: addressing enhancements in the effective recruitment, remediation, advising, retention, and persistence of students, as well as their training for lifelong learning and service to their communities.

B. SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Introduction

"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom." (Baha'u'llah)

These words capture the essential role that education plays in a world searching for answers. Education uncovers the true potential of the individual, and thus, of local, regional and global communities. This essay evaluates the University's educational effectiveness with particular attention to students' differing needs, and levels of preparation and success across demographic categories and courses of study; evidence of students' satisfaction; evidence of effective advising; faculty members' enacted commitment to developing curricula in response to student needs; linkages between scholarship, teaching, student learning and service; and preparing students for work, effective communication, scientific literacy, lifelong learning and civic responsibility in fulfillment of WASC Criteria For Review 1.7, 1.8, 2.2a, 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.13, 2.14, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

In November 2006, the University produced a CPR Self Study that assessed the institution's capacity to realize student success in multiple areas, and made recommendations to extend this capacity in the future. The institution's collective response to these recommendations and evidence of its progress in optimizing three elements of student success are identified below.