

**REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM SEEKING
ACCREDITATION VISIT 1**

For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

To Dharma Realm Buddhist University

MARCH 21-24, 2016

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The team evaluated the institution under the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective judgment for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission. The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. Once an institution achieves either candidacy or initial accreditation, the team report and Commission Action Letter associated with the review that resulted in the granting of either candidacy or initial accreditation and the team reports and Commission Action Letters of any subsequent reviews will be made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit	3
B. The Institutional Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 Report:	
1. Alignment with the Letter of Intent	4
2. Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report	4
C. Response to Issues Raised in the Eligibility Review Committee Letter	5

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC STANDARDS

A. Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives	
1. Institutional Purposes (CFRs 1.1 – 1.2)	8
2. Integrity and Transparency (CFRs 1.3 – 1.8).....	9
B. Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions	
1. Teaching and Learning (CFRs 2.1 – 2.7).....	10
2. Scholarship and Creative Activity (CFRs 2.8 – 2.9)	14
3. Student Learning & Success (CFRs 2.10 – 2.14).....	15
C. Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability	
1. Faculty and Staff (CFRs 3.1 – 3.3)	17
2. Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources (CFRs 3.4 – 3.5)	19
3. Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes (CFRs 3.6 – 3.10).....	23
D. Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement	
1. Quality Assurance Processes (CFRs 4.1 – 4.2)	27
2. Institutional Learning and Improvement (CFRs 4.3 – 4.7).....	30

SECTION III –PREPARATION FOR ACCREDITATION UNDER THE 2013 HANDBOOK OF ACCREDITATION

33

SECTION IV –INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

34

SECTION V –FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Findings.....	35
B. Commendations and Recommendations.....	36

APPENDICES

Credit Hour and Program Length Review.....	39
Student Complaints Review	40
Marketing and Recruitment Review.....	41
Transfer Credit Review	42

SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

Located in Ukiah, California, Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) is a small private university dedicated to liberal education in the broad Buddhist tradition. The university is seeking initial WASC accreditation after being granted eligibility effective October 31, 2013. The Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA) as a California 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation established DRBU in 1976. In 1984, DRBU obtained approval from the State of California for degrees in Buddhist Study and Practice (BA, MA, PhD), Buddhist Education (MA), Chinese Studies (BA), and Translation of Buddhist Texts (BA, MA, PhD).

A decade later in 1994, DRBU terminated the doctoral-level degrees to focus on being a teaching institution. In 2010, DRBU conducted a self-study to examine its objectives, develop a strategy to broaden its reach to a more diverse group of students, and consider pursuing regional accreditation. The 2010 self-study reaffirmed DRBU's long-term educational vision. The campus-wide effort resulted in the creation of two new academic programs: a BA in Liberal Arts and an MA in Buddhist Classics. Moreover, the university made a strong commitment to attain regional accreditation. In May 2013, the California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education (CBPPE) approved the addition of the new programs. In December, DRBU was granted eligibility to pursue WSCUC candidacy and/or initial accreditation based on these two new degrees. Also in 2013, DRBU began phasing out its six BPPE approved degree programs in order to develop and implement the new programs. This effort was completed in 2015. DRBU launched the MA in Buddhist Classics program and the BA in Liberal Arts in fall 2014. DRBU reported four of the six students in the inaugural cohort graduated in May 2015. Currently, DRBU has 16 students enrolled in the MA program and 11 in the BA program. The university has 6 full-time equivalent (FTE) professors and 19 FTE administrators and support staff.

B. The Institutional Seeking Accreditation Visit 1 Report

B.1 Alignment with the Letter of Intent

Based on the team's review of DRBU's Institutional Report and Letter of Intent, there is evidence of continued effort on the part of the university to address the four recommendations initiated by the ERC of December 20, 2013. The timing of the ERC letter coincided with DRBU's updating of the strategic plan initiatives. The DRBU leadership engaged its community in discussions which led to strategies, most of which were reported in the DRBU Letter of Intent. The initial four recommendations are: (1) Transition to a Board with 12 of 19 also on the Association Board to a Board with a majority of independent board members; (2) Continued work on developing learning outcomes that can be measured; (3) Expansion of curriculum beyond traditional "classics" to include exposure to contemporary scholars; (4) Creation of greater self-sufficiency for the University. The language changed slightly between the ERC Letter and the Letter of Intent and Institutional Report to read: *(1) Transition to a Board with a majority of independent board members (from a board with 12 of 19 concurrently serving on the board of the parent organization, DRBA); (2) Continue work on developing measurable learning outcomes; (3) Expand curriculum beyond traditional "classics" to include exposure to contemporary scholars; (4) Create greater self-sufficiency for the University.* The team's review of both the Seeking Accreditation Visit 1st Report and the Letter of Intent shows DRBU making substantial progress towards each of the recommendations since the Letter of Intent. DRBU continues to improve upon the initial ERC recommendations.

B.2 Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

Through the efforts of the ALO and the university's leadership, DRBU has engaged all members of its community in reviewing and discussing the four ERC recommendations. In addition, the ALO recommended that committees be organized based on the various parts of the Institutional Report.

The ALO guided the different campus departments including the Board of Trustees in their self-study. Then, the work commenced and the committees met. The university provided examples of meeting agenda in the data room for the team's review.

The team's review of institutional materials and meetings with DRBU representatives indicated strong evidence of widespread participation in the self-study process and report preparation by DRBU. The report was organized by the WSCUC standards and CFRs. The team found the report to be direct, reflective, informative, well written, and comprehensive.

On January 17, 2016, DRBU submitted its Seeking Accreditation Visit 1st Institutional Report to WSCUC along with a number of supporting documents. The team reviewed the DRBU documentation and completed a summary worksheet in preparation for its team conference call conducted on February 10, 2016. During the call, the team discussed the DRBU report, determined writing assignments, requested additional documentation, and developed a tentative list of necessary points of inquiry during the onsite visit. On March 21, the team met and completed its visit coordination and planning. On March 22-24, the team conducted onsite reviews of institutional documents and interviews with administrators, trustees, faculty, staff, and students.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the Eligibility Review Committee Letter

The recommendations made in the ERC letter of December 21, 2013, the progress mentioned in the Institutional Report, and the recommendations as reported in the ERC letter and the DRBU Letter of Intent are as follows:

(1) Transition to a Board with 12 of 19 also on the Association Board to a Board with a majority of independent board members—ERC Letter; (1) Transition to a Board with a majority of independent board members (from a board with 12 of 19 concurrently serving on the board of the parent organization, DRBA—DRBU Letter of Intent. In June 2015, seven non-independent trustees resigned from the DRBU board. By November 2015, DRBU's search for independent trustees

yielded an election of new trustees making the majority of at-large trustees (9 out of 17). DRBU's goal was to elect committed trustees with expertise in different areas. The new members have experience in higher education, law, community advocacy, board governance, and nonprofit entrepreneurship (CFR 3.9).

(2) *Continued work on developing learning outcomes that can be measured*—ERC Letter; (2) *Continue work on developing measurable learning outcomes*—DRBU Letter of Intent. Since 2013, DRBU concentrated on improving the instruments and methods used in measuring outcomes for the MA program since the program launched earlier than the BA. This was done through the development of rubrics for the PLOs. Student work was assessed and the rubrics were refined. Professors have used the rubrics to assess student work every semester, thus helping them find evidence that demonstrates various levels of achievement and enables them to score student work consistently. The Letter of Intent did report that DRBU has begun similar efforts for the BA program (CFR 2.6).

(3) *Expansion of curriculum beyond traditional "classics" to include exposure to contemporary scholars*—ERC Letter (3) *Expand curriculum beyond traditional "classics" to include exposure to contemporary scholars*—DRBU Letter of Intent. DRBU professors engaged in vigorous debates on curriculum revision. Three points were made in the Institutional Report as a direct result of these discussions. First, historical texts will not be grounds for inclusion or exclusion in the curriculum. Members of DRBU teaching faculty look for works that continue to shed light on the persisting inquires, challenges, and possibilities of human existence. Second, the senior-year Capstone Seminar offers another opportunity to venture into contemporary works. The two-semester seminar is the closest to an elective course that DRBU's required and sequentially built curricula offer. Third, the inclusion of the classics allows DRBU students to engage deeply with different and sometimes conflicting ideas, values, and philosophies of these traditions, all of

which help shape the globalized, multicultural, and interconnected world of today. Together the students' awareness of their separation from different perspectives and the immersive experiment on which they connect with each text constitute a learning experience that is distinctly modern (CFR 2.2a).

(4) Creation of greater self-sufficiency for the University—DRBU Letter of Intent. DRBU claims that DRBA continues to be a strong support to the university. DRBU strives to generate additional income from tuition and donations. A new MA and BA cohort are part of the reason for the increase in tuition revenues. In spring 2014, DRBU saw a need to hire a full-time Director of University Relations who would focus on recruiting new students. The Office of Strategic Planning and Development is working closely with DRBU's senior leadership and the board of trustees to develop and implement a multi-year plan for university advancement. Both efforts will help DRBU develop greater self-sufficiency.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE WITH WSCUC STANDARDS

A. Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes & Ensuring Educational Objectives

1. Institutional Purposes (CFRs 1.1 – 1.2)

The board of trustees of DRBU formally approved its current mission statement in 2015. In it, DRBU states that its purpose is to educate undergraduate and graduate students in the broadest Buddhist values through a Great Books curriculum that draws on traditional Buddhist as well as European, American, Indian, and Chinese texts. DRBU is dedicated to engaging students in “knowledge in the arts and sciences, self-cultivation, and the pursuit of wisdom.” The university states that its “pedagogical aim is thus twofold: to convey knowledge and to activate an intrinsic wisdom possessed by all individuals.” DRBU recognizes that “Developing this inherent capacity requires an orientation toward learning that is dialogical, interactive, probing, and deeply self reflective”

Throughout the visit, the team confirmed that DRBU’s mission statement appropriately reflects the character of its education; and the faculty, students, administrators, and trustees embrace the institution’s mission in theory and practice. St. John’s Colleges (Annapolis and Santa Fe), Saint Mary’s College of California, and Thomas Aquinas College serve the university as models of regionally accredited institutions offering rigorous Great Books programs. Faculty members and administrators indicated to the team that they communicate often with colleagues at these colleges, especially at St. John’s College (Santa Fe) and Thomas Aquinas College.

DRBU coherently and systematically expresses its institutional learning outcomes (ILO), program learning outcomes (PLO), and student learning outcomes (SLO) in its materials and on its website; it has started to provide retention and graduation data and evidence of SLO. The team

recognized the need for the university to develop more comprehensive institutional data that will better guide the institution in moving forward.

2.Integrity and Transparency (CFRs 1.3 – 1.8)

DRBU has published a statement of academic freedom in its catalog, on its website, and in its Faculty Governance Manual, in which the university states that “all aspects of DRBU’s pedagogical design and curriculum center on the preeminent goal that each student develops the capacity to be an independent thinker.” The university asserts, “Buddhist ideas can be held to the same level of questioning and scrutiny as any others.” Throughout the visit, the team repeatedly heard from faculty, students, and staff that the institution’s assertion is accurate.

DRBU recently completed a diversity statement that clearly expresses the university’s commitment to being a diverse and inclusive community. Now that the statement is approved, the university needs to make greater efforts to expand its diversity. Presently, DRBU is diverse regarding gender, age, and religion. While there are many diverse Asian students, faculty, staff, and trustees, the university needs to draw from other underrepresented ethnic groups. Moreover, more diverse students and faculty would enrich the learning experience at DRBU, which relies greatly on shared input from students and faculty. The university reasonably maintains that being an accredited university would greatly help recruit members from other underrepresented groups.

DRBU indicates that the policy of faculty serving as administrators reduces the traditional divide between faculty and administrators. Because the university depends on the Great Books approach that does not require faculty educated in specific disciplines, all administrators have sufficient educational credentials to be faculty members. In fact, the team found that most faculty serve in other roles. At first, the team was concerned that the few faculty members who were not engaged in other roles might be at a disadvantage in the decision making process of the university. In a special meeting with faculty who do not have administrative responsibilities, the team was assured

that these faculty members experienced no disadvantage and were fully involved in the governance of DRBU.

DRBU has widely and explicitly published in its materials and on its website its policies regarding academic goals, programs, services, and student costs.

The university has been open and responsive in communicating with WSCUC, complied with all requests of the Commission, communicated its status appropriately to the public, and consistently maintained a collegial and forthright relationship with WSCUC.

The chair of the board and the university president signed a statement indicating that, as WSCUC requested, a simple majority of at large, or independent, trustees are not affiliated with or have family relationship to trustees of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (DRBA). In its meetings with the president as well as with the board of trustees, the team was assured that DRBU is sufficiently independent of DRBA.

B. Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

1. Teaching & Learning (CFRs 2.1 – 2.7)

The team's review of the requirements, including the syllabi for both the MA in Buddhist Classics and the BA in Liberal Arts, indicated that DRBU's academic expectations are similar to those of peer institutions. The faculty and administrators considered best practices such as program layout, number of units, text selection criteria, pedagogy and teaching methods, student academic preparation, difficulty of materials, pace of reading, evaluation, and feedback methods. In DRBU programs, students study Eastern philosophical thoughts in addition to Western liberal arts, making the courses similar to those of liberal arts institutions. A majority of the teaching faculty (8 out of 13) holds doctoral degrees in varying fields spanning the liberal arts. DRBU currently holds the equivalent teaching capacity of six full-time professors. Four teaching faculty are part-time and

seven hold administrative positions. The 6:27 (1:4.5) professor-to-student ratio and the projected ratio of 8:61 (1:7.6) in 2017-18 is favorable when compared to the average of 1:11.7 among 220 U.S. liberal arts colleges. In reviewing MA and BA requirements listed in the catalog, the team noted that the nature of the programs is such that a student needs to be committed to attending all classes and determined to take the courses sequentially according to the DRBU program structure. The nature of the learning at DRBU is highly dependent on inquiry and discussion, which is the reason for a very stringent attendance policy (CFR 2.1).

Based on the review of both admissions and graduation requirements, the team found DRBU's policy and practice to be very mindful of applicants admitted to both programs, taking into consideration each applicant's academic readiness and fit with DRBU's unique education model. The admissions committee acknowledged the current struggle it has in the face of very little historical data on graduates to help draw inferences on an applicant's readiness for the DRBU academic experience. The team recognizes that over time DRBU will have in place an admissions system that will track and gather data, which will provide the admissions committee with better information. The graduation requirements for the BA and MA degrees are clearly stated in the catalog and on the website (CFR 2.2).

The team reviewed DRBU's BA offerings and found the five strands to be clearly explained. What was not clear is how the program learning outcomes will be measured. At the time of the Letter of Intent, DRBU mentioned that rubrics were being developed to measure the BA PLOs. An initial version of BA rubrics was shared with the intent of using the rubrics to assess student works in January of 2016. In addition, DRBU's teaching faculty members are in the process of examining how the BA program can foster creativity and innovation in students (CFR 2.2a). This was spurred by the ERC's recommendation of expanding the curriculum to include exposure to contemporary scholars. DRBU faculty developed the PLOs for the MA degree with the ILOs as

their foundation. The SAV 1st report referenced the establishment of rubrics based on which assignments are being measured. The professor to student ratio is 1:4.5 in the MA program (CFR 2.2b).

From the onset, DRBU has been poised to create an outcomes based curricula for the two new degrees. This effort was borne of a university wide process to help situate DRBU for future growth and WSCUC accreditation, resulting in phasing out six programs and establishing two: the MA and BA degrees. At the same time, DRBU developed the ILOs, followed by the PLOs for the MA and later, the BA. The challenge faced by DRBU, one not unique to DRBU, is implementing a practice of assessing learning using established and aligned outcomes. The team found evidence that faculty evaluate student work every semester for both the MA and BA programs. The results shared at these sessions directly inform instruction and modification of stated PLOs. In response to ERC's recommendation to "continue work on developing measurable learning outcomes," DRBU faculty implemented an assessment framework (CFR 2.6). By using the framework, faculty engage in refining the rubrics and learning outcomes during regular faculty meetings and assessment workshops each semester. Examples of efforts to improve the rubrics were shared in the report on page 35 (CFR 2.4). During the site visit, the team met with DRBU faculty, evaluated both artifacts and evaluation instruments from the calibration sessions, and engaged with students on the outcomes of the education they are gaining. The team consistently found that DRBU practices its assessment framework.

In its instruction model, DRBU highly values students taking the initiative to push their own boundaries. This student initiative coupled with the shared inquiry pedagogical model provide students in every class with opportunities to synthesize, apply, and practice what they have learned from all past and current courses in the program. The report gave examples of class activities and student performance. The student conference model, which DRBU adapted from St.

John's Colleges and Thomas Aquinas College, serves as a means to provide formal feedback to students.

On campus, the team verified the documentation of such feedback sessions; and it asked students to speak to the strengths and limitations of the process. The team discovered richness in the student records, which contain feedback from instructors about each student's coursework during the semester. The team also met a very devoted faculty who are mindful of developing the whole person (CFR 2.5). As far as graduates' achieving stated levels of attainment, DRBU has put in place an assessment framework comprised of student learning outcomes, curriculum map, assessment cycle, different types of assessment activities, and assessment methodology (CFR 2.6), also in response to the ERC recommendation.

As noted by DRBU, student work assessment so far has provided more qualitative than quantitative data, and the data sample is far from reaching effective size. Over time this may change, especially with impending enrollment growth. The faculty has engaged in the use of calibration as a means of precision assessment. Other assessment processes were tried and tested, resulting in changes to both the MA and BA PLOs (CFR 2.4). At DRBU, the growing culture of assessment has improved DRBU's assessment processes and operations. Systems and processes for organizing, publishing, and circulating both quantitative and qualitative results to the DRBU community are much needed. DRBU acknowledges the need to appropriately warehouse these results. DRBU created an Assessment and Program Review Committee in Fall 2015 to help in the coordination of the culture of inquiry at DRBU. DRBU has integrated the program review process with the strategic plan, which then sets up a mechanism to assess the status of its two programs in relation to fulfilling long-term vision and short-term priorities (CFR 2.6-2.7).

The team discovered that both academic and co-curricular personnel are mindful of developing and implementing a culture of inquiry. Several programs are to be commended for their diligence

in gathering data to help improve processes. Many are poised to engage in the program review process, and the first program review is scheduled for 2018.

2. Scholarship and Creative Activity (CFRs 2.8 – 2.9)

DRBU's core of scholarly activities is centered on Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* with its recognition of scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. DRBU encourages students and professors to reference curriculum in their discussions in the classroom and within other aspects of their DRBU lives. DRBU's educational model defines these roles further as: professors act as guides and not presumed experts; students are encouraged to draw from all parts of the curriculum in their reflections and discussions; professors venture outside their academic background and teach across the curriculum—the faculty are not expected to conduct academic research (CFR 2.8). DRBU recognizes the professors' venturing outside of their respective academic backgrounds in order to study other areas as a serious scholarly endeavor.

The Plan of Employment allows for course relief to audit a course for the purpose of faculty development as well as course relief for developing a new course. In addition to teaching, faculty members hold secondary responsibilities relative to student learning, such as providing student feedback, advising, assessment, and service. The Plan of Employment outlines five criteria for faculty evaluation, all of which promote excellence in intellect and imagination, engagement with and commitment to DRBU's programs, competence in leading, modeling skills and methods of learning, willingness and ability to teach all parts of the DRBU's curriculum, and responsiveness to the needs of the DRBU community. The dean of academics uses the five criteria in the evaluation of faculty members. The team has found this practice to be in its infancy. Both junior and senior faculty members may benefit as faculty evaluation is incorporated into the appointment and reappointment processes.

Furthermore, the team, in acknowledging DRBU as an institution that demonstrates the scholarship of teaching, encourages DRBU faculty members to publish and present papers on their pedagogical experiences. The team recognizes that these experiences are very important in enhancing the life of the faculty member (CFR 2.9) and ought to be considered in the faculty evaluation process.

3. Student Learning and Success (CFRs 2.10 – 2.14)

DRBU is committed to tracking student information. Various units keep track of student information such as the office of admissions and financial aid, registrar's office, office of campus life, office of academic affairs, dining services, etc. DRBU intends to develop the capacity to systematically track data and information across the university and to perform analytic functions when the student population grows beyond 80 students by 2020 or later (CFR 2.10, 4.2). During the visit, the team met with numerous groups who were diligently gathering data from students for both academic as well as co-curricular units. The data collected has improved processes and helped fulfill student academic and co-curricular needs.

In an effort to address the need for the alignment of co-curricular activities with academic goals, DRBU organized the committee on co-curricular activities. This committee is comprised of two professors and four campus-life staff members who implement simple processes and procedures to review and approve co-curricular programs and activities and to develop and solicit ideas from the DRBU community for activities directly related to academic goals (CFR 2.11). While students can submit proposals to the committee, students are not represented on the committee. The team encourages the members of this committee as well as members of other committees to consider student representation. For example, in evaluating student learning and support, the academic resources committee has been mindful of student input.

DRBU is committed to supporting student success. Many student services are still being developed and refined. DRBU has in place a student orientation program, a campus life office, a

residential life unit, dining services, health services, restorative justice process, financial aid, disability services, career counseling, and tutoring (CFR 2.13). The team reviewed these services and found faculty and student affairs staff collaborating within the various units and committees and employing consensus building in their work. The campus life group meets on a weekly basis. The group is led by the dean of students and includes a designated faculty member. The cross pollination has produced student activities and services that align with academic objectives and institutional mission while providing enrichment outside the classroom.

Due to the unique nature of DRBU's two academic programs, DRBU does not accept transfer credit from other institutions (CFR 2.14); as such, DRBU only admits freshmen or first-year master's students.

Conclusion

The team finds that DRBU has substantially fulfilled the CFRs under standard 2. The institution has demonstrated its commitment to creating a culture of evidence-based assessment dedicated to student achievement and quality assurance. There is evidence of great effort on the part of DRBU to be ever mindful of student learning and success. The university has in place numerous practices such as sessions at end of the semester with cohort mentor and individual students and faculty calibration sessions evaluating student artifacts. These help to inform pedagogy, curriculum, and evolution of ILOs, PLOs, and course-level outcomes. In addition, the team commends DRBU for bringing together academic and student support areas to help bridge and foster collegiality, improve communication, and align support services for students.

C. Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Quality and Sustainability

1. Faculty and Staff (CFRs 3.1 – 3.3)

DRBU has sufficient faculty and staff to support programs and operations. The team reaffirmed that DRBU has a higher than average ratio of faculty to students and staff to students. DRBU plans to increase the number of students from students from 27 during 2015-16 to 61 for 2017-18, and it will subsequently increase faculty and staff. (CFR 3.1) In the area of diversity, DRBU demonstrates faculty diversity in the categories of gender, monastic/lay, and age categories; however, more needs to be done to attract and retain members of other underrepresented groups in order to enhance diversity. (CFR 1.4)

DRBU faculty members are qualified and have the appropriate academic credentials needed to teach. Faculty members who teach across the curriculum demonstrate a critical dimension of a prepared faculty willing to further their growth and development in learning additional pedagogy, frameworks, methodology, and disciplines. When discussing DRBU's unique professional and scholarship development, one DRBU faculty member quoted Confucius: "the process of teaching and learning stimulate each other. Teaching is half of learning."

DRBU has clear faculty and staff policies regarding recruitment, hiring, orientation, workload, incentives, and evaluation found in the employee handbook, faculty governance manual, and professor plan of employment that align with institutional purposes and educational objectives. The team learned how the university's stakeholders have worked with specific intent to document policies after serious deliberations, research, analysis, and collaborative decision making.

The team found that DRBU piloted its first round of faculty and staff policies, processes, and evaluations in the spring of 2015. Five junior faculty members have gone through the faculty evaluation process, consisting of a mini-portfolio that includes a faculty reflection, course syllabi and evidence of student assessment and concludes with a review panel. In the professor plan of employment and the pilot professor evaluation 2015, DRBU delineates the faculty roles, responsibilities, and the evaluation process, which shows that the faculty and administrators took great strides to create an integrated system that values the art of learning and teaching, input, and growth. However, the team encourages DRBU to include feedback, promotion, and appropriate peer review as part of the evaluation review process. The team recognizes the need for DRBU to go through more iteration of faculty evaluations of junior and senior professors and reviews to help the institution systematize the evaluation process.

DRBU has seven faculty members who teach and serve as administrators. It is not unusual for small universities to have faculty serving in dual roles. The team's concerns about balance were diminished throughout the many discussions the team had with the faculty and administrators. The team discovered that both faculty and administrators emphasized how the faculty/administration connection exhibits a special awareness of and sensitivity to those roles. To lose such dynamics would destroy the true spirit of the institution. This sentiment was shared across the board.

DRBU also began the process of clarifying staff and administrator workload and evaluation, as delineated in the workload form and pilot staff evaluation. The evaluation review was also piloted in spring 2015, and it incorporates a self-reflection and concludes with a panel review. Similar to the faculty evaluation process, the university would benefit from systematizing the staff evaluation process.

During the transition from teaching out the legacy programs to establishing two new programs, DRBU has maintained dedicated staff, administrators, and faculty who are committed to the

mission and purpose of the university. The transition has required intense collaboration, deliberations, and consensus decision making; and the staff, administrators, and faculty have thrived in this atmosphere of opportunity and creativity. Ultimately, there is something special, which has kept people demonstrating a high caliber of intellect and skill at DRBU that goes beyond just being committed to the mission and vision. DRBU has hired a human resource consultant to further professionalize HR issues, which are still in transition. The university has committed significant funding to support this initiative. (CFR 3.2)

DRBU has been mindful to increase professional development funding from \$11,000 in 2013-2014 to \$13,000 in 2015-2016 and provide opportunities for faculty and staff growth. DRBU has arranged visits and conference calls with universities teaching the Great Books, such as St. John's Colleges (Annapolis and Santa Fe), Thomas Aquinas College, and Shimmer College to discuss best practices comprehensively.

The faculty members have engaged in rigorous scholarship growth and development. They have the opportunity to teach across the curriculum and participate in intense training involving a three-prong approach: observe a class with a senior faculty member, co-teach the class, and teach the class under the guidance of a senior mentor. Initially, this training was a concern in terms of faculty bandwidth and expertise. However, DRBU faculty members see this as an opportunity to learn a new discipline, methodology, and pedagogy. Professors who learn to teach an existing course are given a workload reduction, per the workload form. (CFR 3.3)

2. Fiscal, Physical, & Informational Resources (CFRs 3.4 – 3.5)

The team affirms that the university has provided audited financial reports for each of the three years ending June 30, 2015. Audits were performed by an independent external auditing agency (CFR 1.7, 3.4). In the three years provided, the auditors expressed an opinion that the university's

financials, which were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards (GAAP), “present fairly, in all material respects” the financial position of the university. In none of these three years did the university experience an operating deficit (CFR 3.4).

The university operates as a branch of DRBA. In 2013, DRBA provided a written “commitment in sustaining and supporting the operation and growth of DRBU” and has done so by providing facilities and funding since the university’s founding in 1976.

Unique aspects of DRBU’s finances are as follows:

- 1) The university balances its’ operating accounts each year with a grant from DRBA.
- 2) The university does not pay rent, nor does it pay for maintenance of the facilities it occupies.
- 3) In-kind donations in the form of monastic teaching faculty and administrative staff provide significant cost savings to the university.

Of initial concern to the team was the fact that a substantial amount of funding each year is derived through a grant from DRBA. For example, in the 2015-16 budget year, \$652k, or 33.3% of total revenue, is budgeted to come from DRBA in the form of a grant. Proposed subsequent years’ budgets reflected a similar, but very slightly lower, level of grant revenue from DRBA.

This once-per-year grant is used to effectively balance the university’s operating accounts.

Additionally, DRBA provides, at no charge to the university, all the necessary facilities (dorms, lecture halls, administrative offices, library, etc.) to operate the university. DRBA also provides all the major maintenance for the facilities as well as the grounds upkeep.

Without the above support of DRBA, the team was concerned about the financial viability of DRBU. However, this concern was mitigated by 1) the commitment letter from DRBA mentioned above; 2) the demonstrated DRBA funding going back to the inception of the university in 1976

and; 3) the substantial resources at DRBA's disposal (DRBA owns approximately 25 properties in 6 different countries). Of additional concern was the amount of in-kind faculty teaching and administrative support that was provided by monastics. DRBU is confident that the availability of monastics would be sufficient for many years to come. The team recognized the similarity of DRBU to colleges and universities operated by religious orders.

The DRBU finance organization is well established with a vice-president for finance, a director of finance, as well as two accounting positions. Financial activity is recorded in Quick Books with student account records fed into Quick Books from BlackBaud. Financial reports are produced and reviewed by department managers on a monthly basis.

The university has a well-established process for determining revenue and expense budgets (CFR 3.4). Each year, from May to June, budgets are developed. Staff, faculty, department managers, and the Administrative Council all participate in developing the budget. The board of trustees has final approval responsibility of the budget. Once the budget is approved and the year has begun, spending and variances are monitored on a monthly basis by department managers. The administrative council as well as department managers also review any variances. A three-year budget was provided and, given the increase in student enrollment in recent years, projected figures do not seem out of line with historical financials or the strategic plan.

As mentioned above, maintenance of the facilities used by DRBU is provided by DRBA.

Although the buildings on the campus are quite old, there was no evidence of significant deferred maintenance projects (CFR 3.5). In fact, a solar farm has been installed on the property, which provides all the electricity to the university. The solar farm was activated in December 2015. The university has a flat salary structure. Most employees (faculty and staff) are paid \$48k per year. However, this is expected to increase once the university is financially able to do so. (CFR 3.4)

The institution provides its students with appropriate and sufficient access to information and technology resources consistent with the DRBU educational objectives. The library houses 50,000 volumes, which mainly supported the 6 legacy degree programs and a reading room with 2,000 course reserve materials with access to the Buddhist, Indian, Chinese, and Western primary texts. (Catalog, pg. 9) DRBU believes that “the reading room and the library adequately meet the scholarly needs of DRBU’s small faculty and student population.” DRBU uses Koha, a library management system that students use to locate and self-checkout the texts. The library has inter-library loan access as well as a link with the Library of Congress. The library is open for regular business hours, but if students would like to use the library space outside of those hours, staff is in the library as early as 6:30a.m. Some students have taken advantage of the early hours to conduct meditation sessions in the special Buddhist collection. The library provides students with access to the Great Books in various languages, giving the students an interpretive variance. In addition, students use the reading room, as a lounge and a hub, where they can access the Great Books and self-checkout texts.

The library personnel and Library Committee, consisting of faculty and staff, ensure that the collection serves the faculty’s and students’ need (Faculty Governance Manual). The library meets the needs of the faculty and student populations especially in light of DRBU’s curricular emphasis on the Great Books and professors’ expectations that students focus on primary texts, not secondary resources. The Library focuses on information literacy, and access on, and developing the students’ critical thinking skills. There are plans to renovate the currently library and open the new library facilities by 2020.

Technology is left to the professor’s discretion, as emphasis is placed on seminar-style engagement with the text without the use technology. DRBU provides students with 10 PCs with plans to increase to 24 by fall 2016. DRBU anticipates that the current number of computers to be

sufficient especially considering the prevalence of computer ownership. (CFR 3.5)

2. Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes (CFRs 3.6 – 3.10)

The DRBU charter, DRBU bylaws, and the faculty governance manual illustrate the roles and responsibilities of the board of trustees, president, and faculty. DRBU has revised the membership of its board of trustees to comply with the ERC's concerns regarding autonomy: 7 trustees resigned, and new at-large and independent trustees were appointed to the board of trustees. The team raised a concern with trustees about the board's scaling efficiency especially if it was expected to approve permanent faculty members, dean of academics, and president, etc. When asked this question, one of the board members stated that the university president is the captain of the ship and trustees function as the navigators. Another trustee indicated that board members are not micromanagers, a sentiment reiterated by other trustees and university administrators. The team found no evidence to suggest that this description was inaccurate.

DRBU has an impressive board with solid credentials, and the trustees strongly believe in the university's mission. The board understands its role to ensure that it provides DRBU with needed support to become self-sustaining. The team affirmed that the board is accountable for evaluating the president, appointing the dean of academics and permanent faculty upon the recommendation of the president and the faculty. The team concluded that the board well understands that the institution's leadership is characterized by integrity and accountability.

Leadership accountability and checks and balances are clear and documented from the bylaws to the faculty governance manual. The university's leadership is present in many committees, university governance, and faculty reviews, creating a collaborative operation in which everyone has a voice in decision making. DRBU's leaders infuse a spiritual dimension into their servant leader approach, where they place themselves at the same level as everyone else: this approach inspires integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability. That, without

a doubt, makes the university special. Administrators, including the president, are paid the same as full time faculty. This has set the golden standards of equity. However, in order for DRBU to grow and continue to attract highly qualified faculty and administrators, this system of paying everyone the same salary may need to change. The leadership understands the challenges it faces and the possible need for change. (CFR 3.6)

The institution establishes clear roles, responsibilities, and lines of authority as it relates to the board of trustees, university president, and the faculty, as evidenced in DRBUs bylaws and faculty governance manual. The organizational charts also delineate the lines of authority within the three branches of academics, student affairs, and finance and administration.

The faculty and staff have engaged in intense structural activity to ensure a clear and a consistent decision making process. It became clear to the team that decision making was done through consensus at DRBU. The team meetings with the various constituents flowed almost organically, and team observed that everyone was comfortable in articulating responses without fear of being silenced by hierarchical deference. The team's meetings with committees on instruction, academic resource center, administrative council, student affairs, library, campus life, and co-curricular activities, to name a few, illustrated that highly collegial interaction and engagement is mirrored in the classroom.

Faculty members and administrators serve on many of the standing committees and administrative councils, meeting monthly and sometimes weekly to address structural processes and policies. It was clear to the team that faculty members are given complete oversight over curriculum, as stated in the faculty governance manual and during the visit. Although there is enthusiasm about building policies and structures, the team recognized the possibility of faculty and staff burnout. Knowing that the university has ambitiously embarked on offering two new programs, creating policies and procedures, and applying for initial candidacy/accreditation, the team recognized the

number of meetings will probably decrease. However, the team reminded the university that it needs to be well aware that growth brings challenges.

Faculty meet monthly and, if needed, bimonthly to discuss a full range of academic matters. The president convenes the faculty meetings, and faculty members add their own agenda items. If an individual faculty member wishes to convene a faculty meeting to discuss particular agenda, there is a process to do so and they appear to be comfortable in doing so, as evidenced by their interaction during the visit. There is no distinction made between permanent and non-permanent or full and part-time faculty: all appeared to the team to have a voice on faculty matters, curricula, and institutional governance.

Departments are responsible for their own budgets and receive monthly reports on their spending. The administrative council (the executive council), which consists of the president, the dean of academics, the dean of students, and the vice president for finance and administration, meet regularly to discuss budget and high level executive decisions. There is a simple majority rule practiced by the president when making decisions in the administrative council. The team found that the DRBU organizational model is highly collaborative in reaching decisions. The “Group Wisdom” model was adopted in 2014; and it has been effectively used as a decision making process not only for resolving issues on campus life but also across the board. (CFR 3.7)

The president has been in office since September 2014, replacing the previous president, who retired after serving for more than 19 years in that position. The faculty presidential nomination committee recommended the current president to the board of trustees and the appointment followed the process as outlined in the DRBU bylaws. The CFO has served as faculty, and he now has also been serving as CFO since 2009. DRBU's CEO and CFO are full-time and qualified administrators, as evidenced by their extensive teaching and administrative experiences.

DRBU benefits from a qualified faculty and staff, who have been part of the university for more than five years. The fact that there is little turnover of personnel at the highest level has helped the university establish an effective leadership and management team.

DRBU has a higher-than-average staff to student ratio, and enough cannot be said about the high caliber of dedicated and qualified lay personnel and monastics who dedicate themselves to promoting the highest quality Buddhist education at DRBU. (CFR 3.8)

The DRBU board of trustees, according to the DRBU charter, has the authority to supervise, control, and manage the university's affairs, such as appointing the university president, and to determine the short and long-term goals of the university in accordance with its mission. After the board redesigned and changed its composition of trustees in response to the recommendation in the ERC to have a simple majority of at-large or independent trustees, the DRBU board now is a board independent of the DRBA board. The board of trustees is still transitioning; and it has various tasks and responsibilities in implementing DRBU's governance structure, such as establishing a system to evaluate the president, develop policies and procedures to evaluate the members of board of trustees, provide board training, activate the board's standing committees, and appoint external reviewers to the board of visitors. In addition to these tasks, the board plans to focus on development and strategic planning in the next twelve months. (CFR 3.9)

Professors, permanent (senior) and non-permanent (junior) alike, have oversight of curricula and responsibility for all instruction and program modifications. Both permanent and non-permanent professors are treated equally according to the guidelines in the faculty manual, except in two cases: only permanent professors can recommend to the president the appointment of a dean of academics, and only a permanent professor can act in place of the dean of academics during the absence of the appointed dean.

Faculty governance is widespread and embedded throughout all the university's deliberative processes. The statement in DRBU mission affirming that learning is "dialogical, interactive, probing, and deeply self-reflective" seems to ground the decision making process. Thus, having seven faculty members serving in the capacity of administrators, including president, vice president for finance and administration, dean of academics, assistant dean of academics, and assistant dean of program development reflects the university's commitment to convey knowledge and activate the intrinsic wisdom in all individuals. The team noted the fact that many administrators teach, even now during a demanding time in which DRBU is seeking initial accreditation, is a testament to the spiritual and intellectual fortitude the community. (CFR 3.10)

D. Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Quality Assurance, Institutional Learning, and Improvement

In reviewing DRBU's compliance with this standard, the team looked for a comprehensive system of assessment structures and processes, discerning between the portions thereof that have been implemented to date and have demonstrated tangible results, and those that remain to be further developed and put into practice.

DRBU has defined assessment activities as "a set of instruction-related exercises and processes carried out in the spirit of self-reflection to gauge the university's success in facilitating students' development toward the educational objectives laid out in its mission," and has characterized these activities as "enmeshed in many of DRBU's core instructional practices and activities" (SAV self-study, page 39).

1. Quality Assurance Processes (CFRs 4.1 – 4.2)

Concurrently with the launch of its new MA degree in Buddhist classics in fall 2013, DRBU developed and initiated implementation of an assessment framework consisting of a deliberate set

of quality assurance processes (CFR 4.1). To that end, faculty developed an interconnected set of mission-driven learning outcomes at the institutional and program levels (catalog, page 48) and formulated assessment rubrics for this program as well as for the BA in liberal arts. The syllabi list course level outcomes and link them to the relevant PLOs. Curricula maps for both degrees plot courses to relevant PLOs at the introductory, developing, and mastery level. The quality assurance processes are part of an assessment cycle comprising learning outcome assessment, academic program review, unit review for operational units, and personnel review (Attachment 2.6.1 Outcome Assessment Framework), and they include a variety of assessment activities and methodologies. Evidence of student learning is collected regularly (semester and strand essays) and evaluated by a team of professors. The document summarizing assessment workshops (Attachment 2.6.2), that have taken place every semester since fall 2013 and the related evidence examined by the team (meeting minutes, collection of student work), demonstrate that learning outcome assessment is substantially developed, sustainable, and effective. For example, in the summative assessment exercise carried out in August 2015, faculty compared the final works of DRBU's first MA graduates to their initial works across the four PLOs, concluding that "the first cohort of MA students graduated at the level expected (mostly 3s) on the PLO rubrics."

Similarly, co-curricular programs are part of the DRBU assessment process. The team observed that each of these programs (residential life, work-study, student activities, co-curricular programs, spiritual exercises) has developed a mission statement aligned with the ILOs along with a set of measurable goals. An assortment of surveys measure student satisfaction as well relevance to ILOs (e.g. co-curricular activities questionnaire). Metrics for success remain to be developed in the process; and the team suggests that the non-academic units, where applicable, explore opportunities that co-curricular activities provide data for measuring aspects of whole-person development central to DRBU's pedagogy.

DRBU professors adopted an academic program review framework in 2013 (Attachment 2.72); and while academic program review has not yet seen a full cycle due to the youth of the degree programs, the processes that have been mapped out are clearly sequenced and should cogently feed into the self-study and summative review phases of DRBU's first program level review, scheduled for spring 2018. The framework thus provides a blueprint for the institution as it grows and continues to develop consistent and clear practices and protocols for reporting the results and findings from quality assurance.

DRBU has identified in the SAV self-study (page 94) its need to add metrics to measurement, i.e. to develop a set of indicators of success for improving the criteria of its quality assurance processes. Among all the criteria under standard 4, institutional research (IR) capacity stood out to the team as most in need of improvement (CFR 4.2). Given the university's small number of students, faculty, and staff, developing the IR capacity into a separate unit has not presented itself as a priority. The institution has been able to collect, analyze, and interpret data; and it has begun to incorporate these data in planning and decision making. The learning assessment process, for example, has produced findings concerning the usefulness of data generated, which led to the revision of writing prompts (Attachment 2.6.2), among other changes. However, in order to track learning results over time, reference comparative data from external sources, and improve all levels of assessment, a more fully developed IR capacity is needed. A plan—described in the SAV self-study (page 86) and confirmed by administration at the time of the visit—to assign IR responsibilities to an existing administrator with a background in quantitative analysis appears to be a good step in the direction towards developing databases for the systematic collection, warehousing, and distribution of data. This will help the institution implement and sustain program and institutional review to support DRBU's decision-making needs (CFR 4.1 and 4.2) as the university grows.

1. Institutional Learning and Improvement (CFRs 4.3 – 4.7)

DRBU has invested much thought and effort into creating and maintaining a culture of evidence supporting the assessment and improvement of student learning (CFR 4.3). This is a discernible strength of the institution's academic and co-curricular programs, including the programs organized under Campus Life. The university's commitment to a dynamic cycle of inquiry, evaluation, and change is evidenced by the concomitant design of quality assurance processes with that of the new programs, the involvement of all faculty and student support staff in this process, and the institutional thinking around scalability of assessment as enrollment grows. Assessment efforts to date have led to planning decisions such as increasing tutoring support and adjusting BA degree unit distribution. As DRBU moves from the initial planning and data collection stages to the implementation of a full cycle of program review, the development of more sophisticated IR capacities will necessitate the establishment of relevant policies and practices; faculty and staff will require further training in the efficient and organized collection, tracking, and analysis of evidence in decision making.

DRBU faculty members have been significantly involved in the ongoing inquiry into processes of teaching and learning (CFR 4.4). Professors have collectively developed the learning outcomes and assessment rubrics and are regularly involved in the various learning assessment activities implemented since the launch of the two degree programs. The faculty's analysis of the data collected through these activities has shown evidence of effecting curricular and pedagogical change and improving assessment methodology. For example, a number of PLOs have been revised, assessment rubrics modified, and a calibration step added to the assessment methodology.

It is too early yet in the history of the academic programs for the institution to undertake an analysis of the rigor and effectiveness of grading policies and practices (CFR 4.4). DRBU attests to the intention of performing periodic analysis of grading practice in the future.

As noted in the SAV self-study and evidenced by the Great Books curriculum and the pedagogy of shared inquiry, DRBU has consulted with peer institutions (e.g. St John's Colleges at Annapolis and Santa Fe, Saint Mary's College of California, and Thomas Aquinas College) and other external sources in the process of developing its new programs and assessment practices. The university has also put policies and processes in place to gather input from multiple stakeholders in the assessment and alignment of educational programs (CFR 4.5). For example, the board has appointed five new trustees with backgrounds and accomplishments in education and teaching, business, medicine, nonprofit and social work, and local politics. Based on the interview of newer as well as veteran members of the board, the team is convinced that these trustees will be able to bring their experience and expertise to bear on DRBU's quality assurance and planning activities.

Other processes for garnering input from multiple stakeholders include the role for the board of visitors in the final phase of the institutional review process; incorporating external reviewers in the program and unit review processes; student feedback elicited via regular surveys (course evaluation, tutor evaluation, student activities, dining services, and work-study questionnaires); once-per-semester student-faculty conferences; and exit interviews with graduating students (Attachment 4.5.2). In sum, DRBU has demonstrated sufficient avenues and processes for including multiple stakeholders in the gathering of feedback to evaluate student and institutional learning and participate in institutional reflection and planning processes (CFR 4.5). Once IR capacities are more organized and sophisticated, the institution should also explore ways to use external data for benchmarking student achievement, retention data, and other relevant aspects of assessment.

DRBU's plan for institutional effectiveness review lays out the culmination of reviews in academics, student affairs, and finance and administration (Attachment 4.6.2). By integrating the

institutional review with the strategic planning cycle and thus allowing for assessment outcomes to inform strategic planning, DRBU has demonstrated intentionality to utilize knowledge gained from evidence-based assessment in defining the future direction of the institution (Attachment 4.6.1). It will be interesting to see how DRBU closes feedback loops at these higher levels once program and institutional review cycles are complete in 2018 and after.

Because DRBU is only three years into the MA program and two years into the BA program, the team could not examine a sustained track record of DRBU's consideration of changes that are taking place within the institution (and within higher education) as part of its planning, new program development, and resource allocation (CFR 4.7). As the university points out in its SAV self-study and as the team witnessed, DRBU has demonstrated remarkable flexibility and responsiveness to external and internal forces by significantly reorganizing its academic programs and developing comprehensive support services and assessment structures that reflect both the best practices and the uniqueness of the institution.

Conclusion

The team finds that DRBU has substantially fulfilled the CFRs under standard 4. The institution has demonstrated its commitment to creating a culture of evidence-based assessment dedicated to student achievement and quality assurance. It was clear to the team that the university desires to develop an institutional research capacity in line with CFR 4.2. The robustness and effectiveness of the assessment system and infrastructure—while visible in design and partial implementation yielding some tangible results—cannot be fully evaluated until at least one cycle of program review has run its course.

SECTION III –PREPARATION FOR ACCREDITATION UNDER THE 2013 HANDBOOK OF ACCREDITATION

DRBU has specified the standards for performance that the university expects its students to have upon graduation. (CFR 1.2) These standards are contained in the faculty-developed PLOs: nine for the BA degree, including five core general education competencies, and five graduate level-appropriate PLOs for the MA degree. DRBU's assessment processes are designed to inform faculty of student performance in these core competency areas. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)

DRBU has identified its outcome assessment and program review processes as providing the means to assure meaning, quality, and integrity of the BA in Liberal Arts and MA in Buddhist Classics programs. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.2b) The outcome assessment framework includes mission-driven PLOs, a curriculum map, assessment cycles, a variety of assessment activities employing direct and indirect evidence of student learning, and an appropriate assessment methodology. The assessment cycle is connected to a program review process, which accounts for four review criteria—program alignment, effective student learning, professor quality and development, and sustainable practices. The program review process examines how the programs' core educational activities advance students toward DRBU's educational goals. Program review, in turn, culminates in an institutional effectiveness review process that is integrated with strategic planning. (CFR 4.7)

DRBU has considered scalability of the above processes and has begun to articulate plans for adapting them and expanding requisite functions (e.g. institutional research) as the institution grows and learns from the assessment results as well as from the processes themselves (meta-assessment). (CFR 4.2)

The team is satisfied that the processes described above and verified by team members at the onsite visit represent an appropriate course for the future.

SECTION IV –INVENTORY OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

DRBU has provided a succinct Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators that delineates the systems in place as well as the components yet to be implemented due to the newness of its degree programs (three and two years for the MA and BA, respectively). DRBU established systems to measure the quality of student learning as well as the learning and assessment infrastructure. Formal learning outcomes have been developed and are published in the catalog, on course syllabi, and on the university website. The team concluded that the outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels are explicit and measurable. General education outcomes are integrated in the BA learning outcomes and cover the five core competencies of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, oral communication, written expression, and information literacy.

DRBU faculty members have established the standards of performance and are responsible for assessing the outcomes to ensure that students are achieving the learning objectives. The institution regularly collects direct evidence for the purpose of summative assessment of student learning. Faculty conduct assessment workshops each semester in which they apply a set of assessment rubrics to the collected student work. Findings obtained from these collaborative efforts already inform improvements to curriculum, adjustment to assessment methodology, and changes to academic support services.

DRBU has designed an evidence-based system of program and institutional effectiveness review based on the above-described assessment of student learning. The five-year comprehensive program review is synchronized with the strategic planning cycle. Overall, the team found that the IEEI attests to DRBU's commitment to creating a culture of evidence-based assessment dedicated to student achievement and quality assurance. The robustness and effectiveness of the assessment system and infrastructure—while visible in design and partial implementation—cannot be fully evaluated until at least one cycle of program review has run its course.

SECTION V – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Findings

The team reviewed a wide array of direct evidence verifying DRBU's alignment with WSCUC standards of accreditation. After each meeting with the various campus constituents, the team came away impressed and inspired by the depth and quality of the conversation as well as by the commitment and expertise of the community. The university's community has very clear purpose, deeply values education as a transformative process, integrates seamlessly old and new ideas and practices, and focuses on continuing improvement in all areas.

The next step for the university is to increase its enrollment. Everyone at the institution realizes, as does the team, that this step cannot be taken without accreditation. The team was amazed at the quality of students it has attracted without accreditation; and the team realized that while accreditation may not improve upon the high quality of its students, it would increase the quantity of students. With more students, the academic experience for all students would be enriched. The team also concluded, as did the university, that accreditation would increase the diversity of students as it has been and will continue to be nearly impossible to recruit students from marginalized groups to an unaccredited institution.

The university's connection to the DRBA as the only university of this prestigious Buddhist order allows DRBU to have access to substantial ongoing support. DRBU operates autonomously, and it wishes to strengthen its autonomy and move toward greater financial independence through accreditation. The university recognizes that accreditation would enable DRBU to approach more foundations as well as individual donors, provide its students with access to more financial aid, and position the university as a full member of the higher education community. DRBU has much to offer higher education as in its core educational programs, it is demonstrating how a university can advance its mission and serve its

communities on campus and well beyond. It offers a model of education that adds to the rich diversity of US higher education.

B. Commendations

1. Report. The report was extremely well written, engaging in its presentation, compelling in its documentation, facile in its links to data, and thoughtfully organized around the standards. In every aspect, the report is indicative of the university's deep commitment to and high regard for the accreditation process. The team commends DRBU for creating and managing an effective self-study and for producing a report that well reflects its institutional process.

2. Preparation. The team commends DRBU for its thoughtful preparation for the visit as well as its warm hospitality during the visit. The entire DRBU community – faculty, students, staff, administrators, and trustees – have responded graciously to the team's questions and requests before and throughout the visit. The team is grateful to DRBU for organizing a visit that enabled the team to readily understand and assess the quality and spirit of this academic community.

3. Financial Management. The team commends DRBU for establishing a reliable financial reporting system as well as developing a budgeting process that monitors actual revenue and expenditures. These systems and processes enable DRBU to stay on a successful financial track.

4. Ethic of Care. DRBU's faculty and student affairs staff demonstrate through policy, procedure, and practice an ethic of care that is grounded in the university's mission and values, and is captured in the institutional learning outcomes (ILO 1). This ethic is visible in all aspects of the student's experience (classroom, student conferences, residential life, work-study program, student activities, etc.). The team notes that by virtue of its pedagogical model and the cohort mentoring role, DRBU focuses on students regarding their academic progress and personal growth. Students participate in institutional change and contribute largely to the decision making processes.

5. Community Values. The team commends DRBU for its development and ongoing support of a community that is remarkably engaged in old and new ideas, consistently open to fresh perspectives, and creative in advancing the university's mission on and off the campus. The university's connection to the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association's monastery provides a rare and inspiring learning environment as well as collaborations and opportunities that enrich both organizations.

C. Recommendations

1. Growth. The team recommends that DRBU increase its enrollment of undergraduate and graduate students in order to ensure its sustainability and improve the quality of its education. The university currently has a sufficient number of faculty, staff, and administrators as well as adequate physical facilities, financial resources, co-curricular programs, and overall infrastructure to support a student body that is double or triple its current enrollment. In order to retain an increased number of students, the university will need to consider how it can best preserve the educational character and values defined in its mission statement while serving a larger and more diverse population. (CFR 3.4)

2. Diversity. The university has recently published a comprehensive diversity statement that, in the team's view, meets the expectations of a WSCUC accredited institution. While DRBU has been successful in recruiting a broad diversity of Asian students and staff, it needs to attract and retain members of other underrepresented groups. Given that DRBU's pedagogical style relies on active participation by faculty and students, the educational goals of the university would be better served by input from as diverse a faculty and student body as possible. (CFR 1.4 and 3.1)

3. Faculty Scholarship. The team recommends that DRBU draw on its unique model of Great Books education and its support of Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* to encourage faculty to publish and present papers on the nature and benefit of its pedagogy. In addition, faculty scholarship needs to be a significant part of faculty review. Boyer intended that the scholarship of teaching be expressed not only by

practice but also by research of teaching. Moreover, hosting conferences on the campus dedicated to the benefits of Great Books pedagogy would increase the university's visibility in higher education and would help DRBU grow its enrollment. (CFR 2.8, 2.9, and 3.2)

4. Program Review. The team recommends that DRBU develop and refine its program review protocol and conduct a comprehensive and highly participatory program review of its academic and co-curricular (both student activities and co-curricular units) programs. This review should include sufficient data and analysis to provide meaningful feedback for institutional improvement. (CFRs 3.3, 4.4, and 4.6)

5. Institutional Research. The team recommends that DRBU create a robust institutional research function that will plan, organize, collect, analyze, and disseminate assessment and other institutional information. (CFR 4.2)

6. Faculty Review. The team recommends that the university incorporate the evaluation of both junior and senior faculty members and align faculty evaluation with the process for appointing and reappointing of faculty. The university should document all faculty policies and processes in a centralized location such as the Faculty Governance Manual to provide DRBU with a clear and comprehensive model of faculty review. (CFR 3.2)

APPENDICES

CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)
Policy on credit hour	Is this policy easily accessible? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Where is the policy located? Catalog pg. 54 Comments:
Process(es)/ periodic review of credit hour	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Comments: Professors and curriculum committee reviews syllabi and approve content. The credit hour is also reviewed during program reviews.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Comments: The semester course schedule and syllabi post length of time and days the class meets.
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? DRBU does not offer hybrid or online courses. What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? NA What degree level(s)? NA What discipline(s)? NA Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NA Comments:
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated) <i>Please review at least 1 - 2 from each degree level.</i>	How many syllabi were reviewed? There are no courses that meet for the prescribed labs, internships, clinical, independent study, etc. What kinds of courses? NA What degree level(s)? NA What discipline(s)? NA Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NA Comments:
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? Two What kinds of programs were reviewed? BA in Liberal Arts and MA in Buddhist Classics What degree level(s)? BA and MA What discipline(s)? BA in Liberal Arts and MA in Buddhist Classics Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO Comments: The program information can be found in the catalog and website.

Review Completed By: Adriana Ayala
 Date: March 27, 2016

STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s student complaints policies, procedures, and records.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Policy on student complaints	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, is the policy or procedure easily accessible? If so, where? Catalog and website.
	Comments: Clear and formal process for student complaints, for both grievances based on discrimination/harassment as well as grade grievance process.
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: Grievance Committee reviews complaints via a hearing process. Lead administrator implements outcome. Appeals process is included. All steps in the procedure have a reasonable timeline.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: To date, there is no record of a formal student complaint.
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? See comment.
	Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, please describe briefly: See comment.
	Comments: To date, no formal student complaints have been brought forward. The published policy and procedure call for the Office of the Dean of Students to maintain student complaint records for eight years. Tracking and monitoring will take place through annual reviews of complaints.

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Complaints and Third Party Comment Policy.

Review Completed By: Vanessa Karam

Date: March 23, 2016

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulation*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices.

Material Reviewed	Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.
**Federal regulations	<p>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: DRBU website and catalog accurately reflect that the university is not accredited and does not receive Title IV funds. The Director of University Relations, responsible for outreach and marketing, confirmed that DRBU does not provide incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments.</p>
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Comments: This information is readily available in the catalog and on the website. Time to degree is very clear also thanks to the cohort model in which students all follow the same schedule of all-required classes as they progress from semester to semester. Cost of attendance is published in the catalog and on the website.</p>
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments: Information on career and further pursuits for which graduates are qualified is published in the green view book and is part of admissions counseling. To date only one cohort of MA students (four graduates) has completed their studies. As reported by staff, three have found employment with DRBU; the other has entered the monastic community. DRBU plans to track graduates moving forward and to make information about their employment available.</p>

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By: Vanessa Karam
 Date: March 23, 2016

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations*, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)
Transfer Credit Policy(s)	Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is the policy publically available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? The transfer credit policy is located in the Academic Catalog on pages 56-57.
	Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: DRBU does not accept transfer credits from other institutions. The catalog states, “Because the curricula in the BA in Liberal Arts and MA in Buddhist Classics are fully integrated and build sequentially, DRBU does not accept transfer credit from other institutions.”

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

- (1) Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and
- (2) Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.

Review Completed By: Adriana Ayala
Date: March 27, 2016