

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM  
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

To University of the Pacific  
April 2-4, 2012

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The team evaluated the institution under the WASC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective judgment for consideration and action by the institution and by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. 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. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WASC website.

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## Educational Effectiveness Review

University of the Pacific

Visit: April 2-4, 2012

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# REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

## Educational Effectiveness Review

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### SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

#### ***I-A Institutional Background***

The University of the Pacific has a long history of firsts. Pacific was founded by Methodist missionaries as a liberal arts college in Santa Clara. It was chartered by the California Supreme Court on July 10, 1851, making it the first chartered institution of higher learning in the state. Pacific was the site of the first medical school on the West Coast, the first independent co-educational campus in California, the first conservatory of music west of the Mississippi, the first bilingual/bicultural college in the country, and the first to offer a “Four Year Guarantee.”

This series of firsts parallels Pacific’s history of geographic movement and academic innovation. The University moved from Santa Clara to San Jose in 1871 and to its current location in Stockton in 1924. The Stockton campus includes the College of the Pacific (Arts and Sciences), the Conservatory of Music, the Graduate School, and the Schools of Business, Education, Engineering, International Studies, and Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Pacific also has two campuses in other major California cities: the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento and the Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco.

Pacific's mission is “to provide a superior, student-centered learning experience integrating liberal arts and professional education and preparing individuals for lasting achievement and responsible leadership in their careers and communities.” It has a total enrollment of almost 7,000, of which just over 3,700 are undergraduates. The University offers 65 bachelor’s degrees, 24 master’s degrees and 12 Ph.D. and professional doctoral programs. In addition to WASC accreditation, all of Pacific’s professional programs are concurrently accredited by their respective professional accrediting bodies. (CFR’s 1.1, 1.6)

## ***I-B Accreditation History Leading to the 2012 Site Visit***

Pacific became accredited in 1949. The current accreditation cycle was initiated in April 2008 with Pacific's submission of its Institutional Proposal to the WASC Commission. Three thematic areas were included in the Proposal in preparation for the review of Institutional Capacity: 1) Capacity for Distinctiveness; 2) Capacities in Visibility, Enrollment, and Financial Stability; and, 3) University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes. The CPR site visit occurred on March 30-April 1, 2010, and included day-long team visits to the Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco and the McGeorge School of Law in San Francisco. Following the CPR visit and preceding the EER visit, Pacific submitted an Interim Report on March 1, 2011 addressing three matters identified by the WASC Commission related to governance structures. In accepting Pacific's report, the Commission highlighted two areas where further progress needs to be made: 1) the need for more effective Planning Processes; and, 2) the need to implement its new Budgetary System.

The 2008 Proposal also identified two thematic areas to evaluate Educational Effectiveness: 1) Effectiveness in Distinctiveness; and, 2) Effectiveness in Student Learning. These themes were modified at Pacific's request and with WASC's approval in May, 2011. Those modifications are reflected in the organization of Pacific's EER, which examines three areas of inquiry: 1) Student Success; 2) Assessment of Student Learning; and, 3) Program Review.

The EER visit to Pacific occurred April 2-4, 2012. The team was provided excellent hospitality and work accommodations during the visit. Over the course of the visit, the team met with faculty, administrators, regents, staff, and students. All of Pacific's representatives were open and candid, providing the information and materials needed for a thorough EER site visit.

The team would like to extend its thanks to the University President and her leadership team for their support before and during the visit. The team's appreciation is extended to the

Provost (Accreditation Liaison Officer) and the Self Review Chair for their careful attention to the team's many requests for materials, with thanks as well for outstanding assistance from support staff throughout the visit. Support with the review process provided by the WASC liaison was greatly appreciated.

***I-C The Educational Effectiveness Review (EER): Alignment and Rigor***

The organization of the EER reflects modifications requested by Pacific and accepted by WASC. Those modifications correspond to recommendations made following the team's CPR visit in 2010 – an indicator that Pacific considered seriously those recommendations and set out to address the concerns described in the team's CPR report. Pacific's EER proved helpful in describing actions taken by Pacific in the two years following the CPR visit. The three substantive chapters of the EER describe Pacific's efforts to understand key determinants of student success, to improve student learning assessment, and to develop its system of curricular and co-curricular program review. As such, the EER is well-aligned to Pacific's 2008 Proposal following modifications requested after the 2010 visit.

Pacific's analysis is rigorous throughout and shows a commitment to understanding key areas of concern regarding Student Success and Assessment of Student Learning. Likewise, it examines changes in Program Review and provides a candid assessment of this central element of quality assurance. The EER is clearly written and carried out in the spirit of serious inquiry. The review has engaged Pacific's main constituencies. Pacific crafted its EER in a thoughtful and deliberate manner and did a fine job of addressing WASC Commission and team concerns.

***I-D Educational Effectiveness: Student Success, Student Learning, Program Review and Response to Issues raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Report***

Pacific has reached what can be described as an early stage of crafting strategies and clear plans to address areas of concern. As the EER report and supporting studies and data indicate, Pacific is framing questions and devising plans to improve student success rates, especially toward the success of underrepresented students. Other student groupings that should be studied include Pacific's unique

Asian population, a significant portion of which is Southeast Asian. Such studies will require further disaggregation of data. During the visit the team recommended and followed up with requests for disaggregated data, intending to deepen institutional understanding of student retention and graduation rates by race, gender, economic circumstance, etc. The team encourages the University to continue use of such an approach in future analyses.

Pacific's faculty and academic staff described several promising examples of student learning assessment and showed how results of those assessments were used to improve effectiveness. Pacific has reached a productive emerging stage with regard to student learning assessment. Virtually all of Pacific's degree programs have formal learning objectives; the exceptions are small in number and the circumstances of those programs are likewise exceptional. Among those that do have published outcomes, all have curricular maps and assessment plans; several have multi-year assessment plans.

Several schools that undergo concurrent professional accreditation pursue learning assessment strategies can be characterized as highly-developed in the context of their professional communities. Others have developed approaches that are emerging and reflect a serious culture of evidence among faculty and academic staff. They are purposeful and working well. Likewise, learning assessment practices in Student Affairs are very well-developed and show clear signs of a division-wide approach – from co-curricular and student activities, to students services and athletics.

Within the College of the Pacific, faculty pursue a variety of strategies to assess student learning and a number of programs show promising levels of faculty engagement. Some departments are far more developed than others; some may be characterized as underdeveloped. The key takeaway is that more developmental work needs to be done. Given the range of College

disciplines, no one model is likely to emerge for all of the liberal arts. Nevertheless, the College is poised to craft a general approach that College faculty agree is valid and meaningful. The groups of College faculty members with whom the team met understand learning assessment and agree that it is important. Pacific's ability to make progress in student learning assessment will be tied to progress in the College. Such progress will depend on leadership from College deans and their ability to strengthen faculty engagement.

In terms of Program Review, team members expected to see more progress following the team's and the WASC Commission's 2010 recommendations. It is too early to say whether very recent changes to Program Review will have the desired outcome of augmenting educational effectiveness and strengthening a culture of self-improvement. Nevertheless, it should be stated that Pacific has turned the corner from a past during which Program Review was perceived as a mechanism for closing programs. Pacific's leadership was candid in describing that history and their efforts to reassure faculty that a new approach has been adopted.

There are many positives described in Pacific's EER on which to build. The arrival of a new Provost has been met by renewed energy for forward motion. The team sees evidence of campus engagement to improve educational effectiveness at every level. The Academic Council, Pacific's faculty governance body, has been significantly strengthened by the University's leadership which has provided the Council with staff support, a separate budget, office space and clearer forms of independence than in the past. The University will reap benefits from these changes. Of the many practices Pacific will devise and pursue, success will hinge on faculty engagement and leadership, particularly in terms of taking ownership of approaches to student learning assessment that add value to teaching and learning.

## SECTION II – EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

### **II-A Theme 1 – Student Success**

Defined in terms of persistence, retention, and graduation rates – overall and disaggregated – student success is a critical measure of the effectiveness of a university. It is also important to an institution’s reputation and marketing success. Pacific’s response to the recommendations made following the 2010 CPR visit includes extensive work of several committees. Collectively, these committees addressed retention and graduation rates, the impact of financial aid practices, areas of improvement for underrepresented student populations (Latino/a, African-American students), commuter and transfer student populations, and campus climate. The University’s president and senior leadership identified improvement of student success as a key priority in planning and budgeting and as critical to strategic efforts going forward. Pacific has demonstrated the importance of understanding the factors that affect student success. (CFR’s 1.5, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14, 3.7)

The student success essay identifies several challenges facing Pacific – most notably, the relatively weak preparation for college of just under a third (28%) of entering students. Insofar as students are underprepared for college, the EER notes, resulting performance will be affected. Given relative deficiencies in student preparation, Pacific is performing in line with national averages and expectations. Yet the institution acknowledges that overall graduation rates must improve. Pacific recognizes the challenge and calls for a strategy to improve rates. The EER report adds that the lack of progress is puzzling, given the institution’s use of high-impact and highly effective best practices. To address this lack of progress, Pacific may want to explore the extent and effectiveness of such practices at the program level. Interventions for underrepresented and for transfer students are described as existing outside the academic programs, in discrete student

success programs and centers, which have not yet been coordinated. The team urges Pacific to provide all students (including transfers) access to highly effective and high impact practices, including in pre-collegiate courses. High-impact activities are not yet being identified and assessed in academic departments. (CFR's 2.10, 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, 4.6)

The student success essay examines remedial placement disaggregated by race/ethnicity and failure rates in gateway courses. The success essay also notes that programs that struggle with low enrollment are typically those in which disproportionate numbers of underserved students tend to be enrolled. Programmatic responses to these data are either beginning or are under discussion in some departments such as Chemistry and in Engineering. Because program review, development of program-level outcomes in academic departments, and assessment of student learning outcomes are just beginning to emerge in many programs and are in relatively early stages of development in a number, it is not surprising that questions about the effect of best practices remain difficult to answer, and thus in need of further inquiry. (CFR's 2.10, 2.13)

The CPR recommended that Pacific undertake a thorough study of first-year retention, attending to sub-populations, and to address the coordination of student success interventions overall – including the visibility and authority/accountability of persons and offices responsible for such interventions. The study was done at the class cohort level and may be strengthened if extended throughout programs and departments. It was reported that a new vice provost will be given responsibility and authority to address institutional performance of student success. (CFR's 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.14)

Overall, the EER reports that Pacific is challenged in ways that are typical. Low secondary and post-secondary GPA and weak preparation for college-level work are common indicators of failure to thrive among underserved populations; this finding is likewise borne out in the Pacific data. According to these measures, Pacific is performing on par with other institutions. Pacific may benefit by studying

evidence of effective interventions now being gathered at other institutions with underrepresented populations comparable to Pacific's, including the improving performance of underprepared students in pre-collegiate courses. Useful work ahead may include a concerted effort to study developmental learning for diverse populations as students progress through intentional, highly effective practices. Pacific may improve institutional knowledge of interventions that have potential to change outcomes. Underrepresented student progress has not changed markedly over the last decade and the gap between underrepresented students and Asian and Caucasian students remains stable. The student success essay provided as an addendum to the EER recognizes the need to address this achievement gap. Additionally, Pacific has identified differences between academic programs in terms of persistence and graduation rates based on high school GPA and SAT scores. Through its research and analysis, the Benerd School of Education (BSE), for example, has documented improved student success despite lower academic profiles of its students and thus offers a model of promising practice to inform success for other programs. (CFR 1.5, 2.10, 2.13, 4.4, 4.5)

Pacific is utilizing peer baseline data and benchmarks for aspirant peers to strengthen student success and to implement best practices. It has reviewed the data of five entering cohorts and examined student characteristics and key student experience outcomes to further explore its understanding of student success. Pacific's goal is to raise first-to-second year student persistence from 86% to 90% and to raise their six-year undergraduate graduation from 68% to 75%. Pacific's overall six-year graduation rates are very similar to standard peers and below aspirant peers, the latter showing recent graduation rates of 69.7% and 79.4%, respectively. Persistence and six-year graduation rates for the 2004 freshmen cohort varied among ethnic groups as compared to its peer institutions. White and Asian/Pacific Islander students graduate at rates slightly above the University average. Black, Latino/a, and international students have lower than average

graduation rates. Furthermore, the most recent 2007 new freshmen cohort showed an unexpectedly low four-year graduation rate which is not fully understood. Pacific needs to address these gaps and develop appropriate plans for improvements toward targeted goals. (CFR's 2.6, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6)

The results of deeper study undertaken for the EER indicate a need for continuous improvement, especially toward the success of African-American and Latina/o students, probably for different subgroups within the Asia/Pacific Islander population (disaggregated to study within-group differences), and likely for students with high levels of financial need. As the student success essay notes, these groups are the emerging majority of students at Pacific; thus success in this area is critical to the overall future wellbeing of the institution. The student success essay has taken the experience of underserved students seriously and its findings should be useful over time. (CFR's 1.5, 2.10, 2.13, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6)

Additionally, Pacific has plans to examine retention efforts and practices of peer institutions that can be implemented beyond the first-to-second year timeframe. Pacific suffers a 15% student attrition rate between the first and second years and an additional 15% between the second and sixth year. Enrollment in developmental courses is disproportionate among ethnic groups, with underrepresented students more likely to need basic skills courses and to have lower six-year graduation rates than overall campus rates. Pacific students who enroll in reading, writing, and/or math developmental courses (28% of students are required to take one or more pre-college level classes upon enrollment) had lower graduation rates and higher failure rates in gateway first-year courses as well. The University has plans to refine its interventions with students who require developmental courses or who struggle in gateway courses, particularly given changes in admission standards in which new Pacific students must demonstrate that they have achieved levels needed to succeed in university-level coursework. (CFR's 2.13, 2.12)

Given the profile of entering students, Pacific has conducted additional analysis to determine why current retention trends exist and to develop steps to improve student success. Study of data and analysis of low-performing academic/at-risk students indicate the need to develop plans to identify best practices and strategies, including an early alert/warning system and intrusive advising with staff and faculty/student advisors, to begin in Fall 2012. (CFR's 1.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

Pacific has addressed the matter of disparities in graduation rates across populations by studying cohort data aggregated at the institutional and school level. Freshman persistence rates are lower for sub-populations of underrepresented students. The exceptions are students in specialized programs such as the SUCCESS TRIO Program. Addressing first-year retention, the student success essay acknowledges the need for improvement. While Pacific is making headway in specialized programs for underrepresented students such as the Community Involvement Program (CIP) and the SUCCESS TRIO support program, CIP may benefit from improved connections to financial aid and retention programs for students most at risk. A success program for African-Americans (STEPS) began in summer 2011. Many students during the EER visit stated that the SUCCESS TRIO and CIP programs serving those populations have need for increased resources as they face the threat of decreased federal funding. Pacific should continue to foster a culture of support for underrepresented populations by expanding such programs where it can, to increase opportunities for underrepresented and higher risk students. (CFR's 2.10, 2.13, 2.14)

Pacific enrolls a significant percentage of students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Thirty percent of the incoming freshman class in 2011 was Pell Grant eligible. The institution has taken specific steps to address questions about financial aid in relation to student success. Data presented by the EER dispels concerns about disparities in financial aid practices across defined

underrepresented populations, and the EER self-study reports no significant disparities. The question raised by the team also asked Pacific to study ways in which policy and practice might “impact diversity” and thereby increase participation of students from underserved communities. The student success essay acknowledges that such questions still need to be answered in terms of Pacific’s financial aid practices and to be addressed in the near future, given the growing numbers of students who will be financially challenged. Pacific has a strong commitment to socio-economic access with one of the highest percentages of enrolled Pell Grant eligible populations of private universities in the country. In the future, attention must be directed to low and mid-level “economic family contribution” (EFC) groups, especially underrepresented students, who have expressed the highest levels of finance related anxiety. The student success essay also identifies financial stressors evident in underrepresented populations, noting that such signs of stress are different for students of color than for white students. Pacific plans to monitor relevant data to assess changes in the predictors of student success across EFC and ethnic groups. (CFR’s 1.5, 2.10, 2.12, 4.4, 4.5)

Issues related to concerns over financial aid, academic advisement and student success were voiced by students at the open forum during the EER visit. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the Financial Aid Office, specifically in the areas of customer relations, transparency, efficient practices, and use of technology and business practices. Pacific should determine appropriate actions to address these concerns. Levels of satisfaction were mixed regarding faculty and peer academic advising. Several students characterized their faculty advisement sessions as “obligatory,” and “lacking in knowledge about requirements.” Students acknowledged that peer advising is underutilized and may be enhanced to benefit all students. Others described advisement in the School of Business and Education as effective and helpful. The team recommends that Pacific review its faculty and peer academic advisement systems to ensure effectiveness. (CFR’s 1.5, 2.4, 2.10, 2.13, 2.14)

### ***Transfer and Commuter Student Success***

Pacific responded to the recommendations during the CPR visit regarding student success for transfer and commuter populations by making changes designed to improve these students' sense of community and by enhancing support through its Retention Analysis Network group. Additional work is needed on student success for African-American transfer students, whose success rates are lower than other transfer students at Pacific. The University implemented new initiatives based on lessons learned from transfer orientation programs which will positively affect the social integration needs of transfer students. In response to a 2010 team recommendation, Pacific repurposed a classroom space as a commuter lounge space which opened prior to the EER visit in spring 2012. In addition, Pacific is continuing to work with local community colleges and student life offices to further address the academic preparation of transfer students and to assist with their transition. The Retention Analysis Network continues to monitor transfer student success and to evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions. (CFR's 1.5, 1.7, 2.2, 2.11, 2.13, 2.13, 2.14)

### ***Experiential Learning***

Pacific should be commended for the interesting ways it inculcates experiential learning through its curriculum and undergraduate research opportunities. Pacific has a goal of 100% student participation in experiential learning. While the University has not yet met its goal, it is reported that 84.9% of students in 2011 participated in experiential learning. Opportunities for internships, cooperative education, service learning, undergraduate research, fieldwork, and study abroad are integrated into students' academic programs with the support of faculty and staff. A decrease in support may negatively affect participation and drive departments out of the program. Pacific has appointed an Assistant Provost for University-Wide Academic Programs to

further enhance such learning. Experiential learning includes undergraduate research which is central to Pacific's distinctiveness. Given that student/faculty ratios in the lab sciences are high and that laboratory research is expensive, departments may not be able to offer more opportunities for undergraduate research without new faculty lines. Meanwhile, faculty workloads have grown as new tasks (including experiential learning, assessment, undergraduate research, innovation initiatives, etc.) are added to 'normal' faculty workloads. Senior administrators acknowledge that this is a major issue for the faculty. Pacific has secured additional funding for undergraduate research across disciplines which was used for travel and registration to present research at national conferences. Some faculty expressed concern about future funding and ensuring continuity absent such funding in coming years, including compensation for faculty taking on this additional task. The team notes that different types of experiential learning require varying time commitments on the part of faculty, with undergraduate research demanding the most and internships the least. Although release time is available, some departments are too small to use release time. The University is urged to review its practices with regard to different types of experiential learning to achieve equity in faculty compensation. (CFR's 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 3.1)

### ***Diversity***

The CPR recommended that Pacific have a "serious conversation" to address matters of domestic and global diversity, to consider the participation and educational success of underrepresented groups, specifically Latina/o, African-American, and American Indian groups. Progress is evident and work is beginning with broad institutional discussions and strategic research and analyses, including the work of the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. New initiatives have been developed which will advance Pacific's diversity goals, particularly through the diversity curriculum requirement, faculty mentoring programs, a bias response team, training institutes for faculty, and the President's "Tomorrow

Project” and “Beyond Our Gates” initiatives. These new presidential initiatives to build connections with local and regional schools are a good long-term strategy to increase diversity.

Stockton’s population is approximately 40% Latino/a and 12% African-American, and the Latino/a K-12 population is even larger, which may provide an opportunity for Pacific to improve its outreach in California. To improve domestic diversity, Pacific should determine how to attract Latino/a prospects, who are the largest growing demographic in the state. Latino/a and African-American students remain underrepresented at Pacific with inequitable achievement for students not in impactful programs, such as CIP or SUCCESS TRIO. The future of Pacific will depend on the success of the new plurality populations of the state, hence the urgency of this line of inquiry in the CPR and in this report. (CFR’s 3.8, 4.1)

The President has appointed a Diversity Task Force which has proposed a new Diversity Strategic Plan. The proposed plan is a solid framework for achieving educational effectiveness. The proposed actions and recommendations will move Pacific from diversity-focused to a more integrated approach of inclusive excellence which values access, equity, retention, and success for Pacific and its community. The report is broad, well developed and focused on key areas in which opportunities and challenges exist and appropriate actions can be taken to address each of the following areas: students, faculty and staff, curriculum and co-curriculum, campus climate and diversity, and a Diversity Scorecard. The proposed Diversity Strategic Plan holds potential to help Pacific. In order to build a culture of inclusive excellence, it is recommended that the proposed plan become part of the fabric of Pacific’s new strategic plan. (CFR’s 1.2, 1.5, 2.3, 2.6, 2.1, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

A cursory review of local/regional demographics suggests diversity ought to make Pacific distinctive. The city of Stockton and San Joaquin County are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and

socio-economic status, and Pacific has much to offer underrepresented students from the region. Recruitment and retention of more African-American, Latino/a, and Native American students will help help make Pacific more relevant to the future of California. Pacific should make it a priority to identify individuals/units who will be responsible for helping these students set goals and for developing systems to monitor student progress. This will require benchmarks and a greater sense of institutional accountability.

Pacific might consider a more specific charge to the Assistant Provost for Diversity in recruitment, outreach, and enrollment of underrepresented students. Given the demographics of this region, coupled with the potential of recruiting and retaining the fastest growing population of underrepresented college-age students, Pacific is capable of national prominence and visibility in student success for both undergraduate and graduate/professional students from underrepresented populations. (CPRs 2.1, 2.4, 2.7, 4.4, 4.5)

Overall, Pacific has made progress since the CPR in fostering student success. Pacific has made a commitment to student success by establishing a new Vice Provost position with primary responsibility for student success, learning, and retention. Both immediate and long-term plans have been developed, including the academic preparation issues of students prior to enrollment, the implementation of best practices in developmental education and gateway courses, analysis of student persistence, and a university-wide, mid-semester early alert system. A related issue which may affect student success is campus safety. Safety and security are fundamental to student wellbeing and success. The team learned that Pacific will conduct a study through external consultants to better respond to campus safety concerns. (CFR's 1.5, 2.10, 2.13, 2.13)

## **II-B Theme 2 – Assessment of Student Learning**

Students' achievement of defined aims and outcomes is essential to institutional wellbeing and integrity and thus to the institution's overall educational effectiveness; hence the critical and central importance of assessment of student learning as an institutional practice. The WASC Commission's CPR action letter observes: "It is expected that Pacific will have student, course, program, and institutional learning outcomes developed by the time of the EER and that the learning outcomes will be measured and implemented." The CPR team report observed, further: "Progress on assessment of student learning at the program level is insufficiently developed and needs to be addressed . . . and constitutes a significant challenge for Pacific as it approaches its EER." (CPR: 35) At the same time, the CPR report commended Pacific "for its efforts to adopt institutional learning objectives and outcomes for its graduates, which reflect its core mission and educational and aspirational values. Such an effort will provide Pacific with a coherent framework and foundation to meet its goal of building and integrating student learning through both curricular and co-curricular programs. . . . It is hoped that these objectives will serve as a common set of core learning objectives/outcomes for all university programs." (CPR: 26)

The EER visiting team recognizes the progress made since the CPR and observes healthy albeit uneven advances in practice. Pacific has devised and launched a professional development plan for assessment and has prompted activity for assessment of student learning across the institution. The plan, directed by the Assessment Working Group (AWG), demonstrates institutional concern for a culture of learning and assessment and a determination to advance student learning. Formed in 2010, the AWG has been charged with communication and coordination of assessment of student learning outcomes in all programs and across the institution and with the work of professional development necessary for sustainable practice. The

AWG is bringing about cultural change from the ground up. The membership represents all academic and student life units and has brought leadership, commitment, and informed practice to Pacific, intending to foster a culture of assessment. The plan to work with faculty where they are, so to speak, has built trust and encouraged faculty to take assessment to heart as a practice of learning in and of itself. This culturally astute and caring attention to student learning outcomes at the program level and at the institutional level has the potential to be enduring.

Two years into the work, the AWG can point to evidence of progress across the board, in almost all programs and at all levels. AWG intends eventually to work with university-wide objectives, once program assessment has been established. They expect to be able to map the program assessments to the university-wide objectives, rolling up the assessment results. Some parts of the map are filled in. Student Life, for example, has prepared a chart that details their own areas of work on shared values. The School of Business has mapped their work on assessment to six of the seven university-wide goals. As discussed below, the visiting team discovered continuing progress on assessment of general education, a critically important program for schools at Pacific that serve undergraduate students. General education leaders can describe points of convergence of general education and university-wide objectives. For example, the Pacific Seminars that are the foundation and culminating experiences of general education are aligned with university-wide objectives. (CFR's 2.7, 2.11)

Pacific has taken measured steps to address the Commission's expectations concerning assessment of student learning. The degree to which the institution and faculty have embraced the concept and practice of learning-centered assessment within a teaching- and learning-centered environment is noticeably improved since the CPR. The administration has designed what appears likely to be sustained as an effective educational framework. Anecdotal evidence gathered through team conversations throughout the Pacific community points in positive directions. The team sees willingness

and curiosity as well as frank questioning – all signs of productive and welcoming attitude.

Faculty, staff, and students understand that Pacific shares a commitment to learning-centered education, working with learning outcomes and assessments to document progress.

Actual practices vary from initial to emerging in academic departments, particularly within the College of the Pacific. Each department in the College has been engaged in professional development. Each can identify assessment activities that align with program outcomes. The team observes that assessment activities in the College may be arrayed developmentally across the WASC Program Learning Outcomes rubric. English and Biology, for example, are working with assessment practices at the course level, in a small set of selected courses. They are just beginning to use the results of the assessment. History, Communication, Earth and Environmental Science, and Sports Science, on the other hand, have advanced to the emerging level and are using the results of assessment to make adjustments to their programs.

Assessment is well-developed in Student Life, which has produced a chart of assessment activities reaching back to 2006. The chart describes efforts for continuous quality improvement. For example, Student Life completed their fifth year of assessing university-wide objectives in 2010-2011. They have discovered, for instance, in that year that students made gains in intercultural and global perspective-taking. Each year, Student Life assesses a different area of learning, aligned to the university-wide objectives, and uses the results for improvement.

Those schools that undergo concurrent accreditation through a professional accreditation body have likewise moved ahead to develop strategies to assess student learning at the program level. It is important to acknowledge that some of these practices are just beginning to emerge and some are more thoroughly developed. The School of Business has collected two years of data on student learning and has begun their initial analysis of progress. The School of Pharmacy is

within their second round of assessment, using the results of the first round to improve student performance. Pharmacy discovered, through assessment, that some of their students need to develop their general professional skills. Accordingly, the faculty adjusted the program. In each case, distinctively, the several professional schools have devised plans for using learning outcomes assessment and creating meaningful feedback to faculty. The feedback is intended to guide faculty as they emend both courses and programs. In several cases, students are involved directly in the work. While each school is at a different stage of such work, each has produced a faculty-centered approach to assessment of defined student learning outcomes across an array of programs. Support for the work is a shared commitment of faculty and deans' offices. In some cases professional schools have collaborated to learn from each other. Such collaboration may serve as a model for the institution.

Across Pacific, the team discovered that student learning objectives are set and published at the program level. All but five undergraduate programs had published outcomes by the time the EER report went to press. The five are the BA in Applied Science (now undergoing approval), Pre-Pharmacy (not a degree program; undergoing approval), Pre-Dental (not a degree program), Liberal Studies (a discontinued program), and BA in Social Sciences (still to be developed). All graduate and first-professional programs have published outcomes (EER: 27).

As mentioned above, Pacific has published university-wide outcomes. They include major field competence, critical and creative thinking, communication, collaboration and leadership, intercultural and global perspectives, ethical reasoning, and sustainability. The team observed that the EER reports accurately on the current state of alignment, mapping, and assessment of the university-wide objectives. Pacific has a plan for translating these objectives into outcomes for assessment of student learning. The model for implementation has been designed for all curricular and co-curricular programs. The EER reports that “most” programs have mapped courses to outcomes of field competence, critical and

creative thinking, and communication. “Many” have addressed leadership and collaboration. “Relatively few” have worked with intercultural and global perspectives, ethical reasoning, and sustainability. (CFR’s 2.3; 2.4, 2.7; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6)

General education and the diversity requirements (a diversity course is required for all undergraduate students) are being assessed in a decentralized way, which has been typical practice at Pacific. Home-grown or locally developed assessment practices within programs have in fact been developing at Pacific for several years. One might describe the approach as organic. The General Education committee is responsible for assessment of the learning outcomes of the Pacific Seminars (PACS) and the general education area requirements. PACS assessment is far advanced over area requirements. At the time of the EER team visit, the committee is still making plans to assess general education area requirements.

In the Pacific Seminars, assessment is well developed. PACS1, the first of the three seminars, is in the midst of conducting an assessment of the embedded writing program, in coordination with the First-Year Experience program. PACS2, also a foundational program for first-year students, has a signature assignment and works closely with the library to develop and assess learning in the course. The assessment employs rubrics. Forty PACS2 instructors are working together to assess several of the GE outcomes. The latest work revealed that students are tending in their writing to be “encyclopedic” rather than developing arguments; consequently, teaching will be adjusted to address this identified need. PACS3, the senior-level culminating course in the program, is working on a similar project. They are assessing students’ ethical reasoning as presented in the signature assignment. The team also discovered that the diversity requirement, which is under the purview of Faculty Diversity Curriculum Committee, is in fact being thoughtfully assessed by its multidisciplinary program faculty and within Student Life. The

Faculty Diversity Curriculum Committee has oversight for the work of the faculty who are assessing the results of learning in the diversity requirement.

Turning to the matter of level of expected achievement, the team observes mixed progress. Expectations for levels of student achievement have been established in programs that are using rubrics, of which many examples exist, including programs in the College such as Modern Languages. The proficiency levels are being developed inductively, that is, within a number of programs. The School of Education has been intentional in their design of assessment across levels of proficiency. It is possible that the many and varied assessment practices that employ rubrics will together produce sufficient evidence of students' progress across levels of learning. This development of proficiency may be expected to occur, gradually, over time. The EER admits frankly that many programs have not set levels of proficiency. The EER observes as follows: "Many programs have not yet set levels of proficiency for their outcomes or specified how to assess students' levels of proficiency." The team observes that evidence of proficiency may in fact be awaiting harvest. (CFR 1.2; 2.3; 2.4; 4.1)

Concerning longer-range planning and use of assessment, the team observes that Pacific's work is at the emerging stage. All degree programs have assessment plans, which are being developed within an intentionally supported framework for student learning assessment at the program level. Whether students are in fact learning what they are expected to learn over time, at expected levels, remains to be seen. Faculty in many programs are now beginning to discuss whether the results of assessment are good enough. They are discovering how to use the results of assessment to "close the loop," as a number of program assessment reports observe. Pacific appears to be in the initial stages of answering these questions in most departments. Some departments are at the emerging or developed stages. Case studies presented in the EER point to the Communications Department, the School of Dentistry, and the University Library as the more developed. Conversation with faculty indicates that even in departments

taking their first steps to assess learning there is a growing awareness of the usefulness of results and a consequent interest in using the discoveries of assessment. The team was able to review assessment reports for departments in the College, for example, and to confirm that faculty are discussing and using the results of assessment. (CFR's 2.4, 2.6, 2.11, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

WASC asks how faculty demonstrate responsibility for assessment and improvement of learning. Assessment plans are demonstrably being developed by program faculty and staff at Pacific. Abundant evidence appears in the program materials assembled for the EER. As is typical of Pacific, the grass-roots ownership of the work suggests much variety in the selection of tools for assessment. The local ownership of plans has been a more important goal for Pacific. The institution has understood that a prescriptive plan for incorporating multiple tools would be less effective than would the "bottom-up" approach. In fact, across the institution faculty and staff are using multiple tools for assessment, including formative and summative strategies. Many flowers are indeed blooming. The Philosophy department is an example in the College. Law is an example among the professional schools. The team observes that programs are discovering their own approaches, incorporating multiple tools as seems best for them. It is clear that assessment plans across the institution are working with measures beyond GPA. Most are using formative and summative strategies, incorporating direct and indirect measures. Several programs use student and alumni surveys. As mentioned above, many are using rubrics. Some, such as Student Life, are assessing electronic portfolios. The School of International Studies, a relative latecomer to the work, has in a short period of time designed a plan using multiple tools for assessing students' progress. In sum, the institution as a whole is not yet developing an intentional plan for coordinating and analyzing the variety and array of tools. Such work may well be helpful in future. Again, the emergence of such work is organic rather than prescribed. Yet, as the team observed,

the activity appears to be highly generative and likely to be sustained because grassroots ownership is robust. WASC inquires as to whether assessment is being implemented as planned, whether it is doing this work effectively, with sufficient self-awareness of its progress. The team agrees that work is at the emerging stage overall, as noted above, and that Pacific is making commendable progress. The team respectfully observes that the extent to which Pacific is achieving its mission relative to student learning remains unevenly documented in the EER report and supporting data. Pacific has presented evidence of self-study directed to questions raised by the CPR report and Commission letters. There is variability in the degree to which the inquiry has addressed critical questions concerning assessment of student learning. The team believes that Pacific has demonstrated the will to continue their investment in learning and in growth of their success as a learning institution. (CFR's 4.6, 4.7)

The team discovered that the Pacific faculty and staff express interest in building their community of practice of assessment across programs and divisions. They likewise spoke frequently of growing interest in use of data on learning. Many wish to advance their capacity to analyze assessment results. The team offers the following observations which may be helpful.

Pacific may wish to consider the benefits of formalizing the Assessment Working Group as a standing governance committee, with appropriate responsibility and authority. The AWG has been received in a highly positive way by the community.

An institutional data system with capacity to support data delivery for assessment of student learning outcomes may be useful to Pacific over time as a means to make assessment sustainable and to communicate and use results. Institutional capacity for analysis of data may require investment and enhancement as more and more faculty engage in assessment. A learning management system, several of which are in use on campus, might be considered for support of or in convergence with electronic portfolios for purposes of assessment.

Pacific may benefit from development of a formalized system of rewards for faculty and instructional staff for the practice of assessment – considering potential for such a system of within merit or annual review, promotion and tenure reviews, and program review.

Student success may improve through an intentional coordination and collaboration for assessment of the diversity requirement (in connection with general education area assessment) as well as within assessment of the PACS. Further, an assessment crosswalk, mapping, and collaboration among these general education programs and major programs would be helpful to strengthen integrative learning overall at Pacific. Developmental learning (pre-collegiate courses) and First-Year Experience might be included in this coordinated work, as might the appropriate Student Life programs.

Pacific may benefit from coordinating work on student success and inclusive excellence with work to advance assessment of student learning outcomes (both programmatic and institution-wide, including general education). Ideally, student success improves through active practice of learning outcomes assessment, the results of both visible in program review.

Pacific has made clear and evident progress since the EER. The team concludes that there remains a need for continuous improvement if Pacific is to embrace assessment of student learning sustainably over time, as a way to address its mission. The community has demonstrated the will to advance learning in a comprehensive, culturally attuned way. Progress over the next several years will depend on intentional leadership from the ground up and from the top down.

### ***II-C Theme 3 – Program Review***

Program review is integral to how an institution achieves its educational objectives through its core functions. All academic degree granting programs are subject to systematic program review and the process as a whole should address whether the program under review

has properly analyzed both its stated learning objectives and outcomes as well as its program retention and completion rates. In appropriate instances, program review should also analyze the results of licensing examinations and placement and, increasingly, evidence from external constituencies such as employers and professional organizations should also be used in examining the effectiveness of an institution's academic programs. During a Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR), the focus is on whether the institution has an appropriate program review infrastructure in place that supports and influences student learning. However, an Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) moves from a concern with processes to a focus on educational results – are program reviews conducted as scheduled across the institution? What has each program learned from the reviews? Are there patterns emerging when reviews are compared? What programmatic and curricular changes have been made as result of program review? Are reviews linked to resources in order to make necessary improvements? (CFR 2.1; 2.4; 2.6; 2.7; 2.11; 4.3; 4.4; 4.6; 4.7)

The WASC Commission's action letter of July 15, 2010 noted that Pacific would be expected to have a systematic program review process and schedule in place by the time of the EER visit. In addition, it was expected that completed program reviews would be available for in-depth review by the EER team during the visit. These expectations stemmed from CPR Report of April 2010 indicating that program review at Pacific was "seriously underdeveloped" and the report urged Pacific to address this issue in a "timely manner to ensure its educational effectiveness" (CPR: 28). The key issues around program review raised in the report were a concern about who was ultimately responsibility for "closing the loop" and following through on recommendations; the absence of an external component to the review process (i.e., outside of Pacific); the need to link program review to planning and resource allocation; the necessity of synchronizing program review and professional accreditations; the requirement that program review encompass only individual academic degree programs rather than entire schools and colleges; and finally

the need to establish explicit criteria for the evaluation of co-curricular activities. (CFR 1.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.7; 4.4; 4.6; 4.7)

The Educational Effectiveness Report states that Pacific adopted new guidelines for program review in 2008 and, since the 2010 CPR visit, the University has “continued to refine the program review process.” (EER: 36) The last substantive review of the guidelines occurred in Fall 2011. The changes included the development of program outcomes and assessment for every academic program, a revision of the program review guidelines, improvements to the program review schedule, the piloting of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) and solidifying the relationship between program review and resource allocation. (EER: 36)

The guidelines require programs to prepare annual reports based on their missions and goals and, in the sixth year, the program prepares a “cumulative self-study assessing the program’s success in meeting its mission and goals and concluding in an action plan for program improvement.” (EER: 36) A review team including members external to the program and university conducts a formal review based on the self-study and the action plan. A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is developed from the program review by the relevant dean or vice president. If the plan requires new resources, it goes to the Institutional Priorities Committee (IPC). The Provost then responds to the action plan and the IEC “considers the quality of the program review and recommendations included in the review.” (EER: 36) After a Cabinet level discussion of the IEC assessment, the President provides final recommendations on any budget decisions. It is also the case that the IEC reviews progress on the reviewed program’s action plan after two years. These new guidelines will be comprehensively reviewed in Fall 2013.

Administrative accountability for program review is exercised by a number of different individuals and committees. According to Pacific’s new program review guidelines (University of

the Pacific, Program Review Guide, March 2012), at the university-level, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) “oversees the implementation of program review in coordination with the Provost Office.” (University of the Pacific, Program Review Guidelines: 3) Members of the IEC are available to give advice and counsel to programs about the self-study and it is this body that reviews drafts of the self-study. In addition, it is the job of the IEC to serve as a “conduit to the Cabinet and Board of Regents to ensure progress and quality of instructional assessment and overall institutional effectiveness.” (University of the Pacific, Program Review Guidelines: 28) Operational and logistical responsibility for program review is housed in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), under the direction of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness. This position was filled three weeks prior to the EER visit; the new director will assume his role in the summer. This office “supports and manages institutional effectiveness activities, including program review for all academic and non-academic units on campus.” (University of the Pacific, Program Review Guidelines: 3) It is the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Director of Learning and Academic Assessment who meet with the department chairs/program directors to prepare the self-study, provide data reports, review timelines, arranges for external reviewers and discuss issues unique to each program. (University of the Pacific, Program Review Guidelines: 5) The academic dean(s) or vice president also plays a role in the process but not as directly as s/he might at other institutions. They collaborate and liaise with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness on self-study preparation, the self-study report, the external review and most importantly, the formulation of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). (University of the Pacific, Program Review Guidelines: 29) In this regard, it is the dean(s) or vice president who meets with the program director to create the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and they have responsibility for implementing the plan and providing status and progress updates to the IEC.

The team found recent actions relative to program review to be commendable. The new program review guidelines were formulated and written by the new Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC). After analyzing and reviewing the old guidelines, they quickly and correctly saw its deficiencies and moved quickly to rectify the problems, drawing on information and best practices gleaned at various WASC educational workshops on program review. It is rare that a relatively new university committee seizes the initiative and acts with such alacrity and foresight and the IEC is to be commended for their actions and for the thoroughness and clarity of the new guidelines. In very short order, they have brought coherence and method to the process while at the same time being sensitive to long-standing faculty concerns and fears about the use and misuse of academic program review at Pacific.

The new program review guidelines represent a significant improvement over the previous guidelines which were changed substantially. First, the new guidelines make the assessment of student learning a more central element in the program review process. Second, the guidelines specify in greater detail the kinds of data that programs should use in conducting program review. Third, the new templates and tools provided in the guidelines should make the program review process much easier and less time consuming for departments and programs. Fourth, with the appointment of a Director of Institutional Effectiveness and formation of the IEC, Pacific have taken significant steps in bringing greater coherence to the logistical and organizational challenges faced in conducting program review across its three campuses. Finally, the new document specifies some of the reporting and accountability mechanisms that are so important to the legitimacy and sustainability of the process. It is worth repeating that these new guidelines have emerged because Pacific was willing to reach outside of itself and send people in search of the best practices in order to improve the institution.

Nonetheless, the new program review guidelines created something of a quandary for the visiting team. The WASC Commission action letter of July 15, 2010 was clear and unambiguous – Pacific was expected to have a systematic and robust program review process and schedule in place by the time of the EER visit and a number of *completed* program reviews were to be available for in-depth review by the visiting team. Under the normal conditions of an Educational Effectiveness Review, the visiting team would be reviewing the scope, timeliness, effectiveness, alignment, findings and budgetary implications of the program reviews that had been conducted. Special emphasis would be placed on the achievement of programs’ learning outcomes and the team would sample a wide range of current program reviews (self-studies and external reviewers’ reports) to assess the impact of program review processes and their alignment with Pacific’s quality improvement efforts, academic planning and budgeting. But no program reviews have been conducted under the new guidelines and none will take place until Fall 2012.

Unfortunately, the academic program reviews available to the team for examination were, through no fault of the faculty involved, not adequate. The eight-page English program review (from 2008) largely focuses on curriculum issues (establishing tracks within the curriculum, enriching world literature offerings, expanding the website, articulating expectations for majors, re-numbering courses, producing a handbook and writing job descriptions for new hires). Furthermore, there is little data in support of the assertions contained in the report and no data on or discussion of faculty and student demographics, retention and graduation, and faculty workloads. More importantly, there is no consideration of or evidence on the assessment of student learning in the department. The Theater Arts program review (from 2009) was better in that the report mentions the program’s learning outcomes, the importance of the program in general education, the success of the program in tailoring learning experiences to individual students and the department’s assessment process. But there is virtually no empirical evidence in the report and no description of how student-learning assessment has resulted in

meaningful curriculum changes. The team understands that the paucity of the academic program reviews might be related to the nature of the 2008 guidelines and the legacy of suspicion and trepidation surrounding the uses of program review. It is not surprising that IEC found the old guidelines inadequate given the program reviews that were produced under them.

It might be possible to view the new guidelines created by IEC as no more than an incremental improvement over the 2008 guidelines, but such a perfunctory response would fail to recognize that something significant has begun to take place at Pacific. In the view of the visiting team, there has been an important shift in the culture of assessment at Pacific since the CPR visit in 2010 and the creation of the IEC and its formulation of new program review guidelines are perhaps emblematic of that cultural turn. The visiting team's discussions with the IEC and the Assessment Working Group demonstrated that a pervasive and reflective understanding of the benefits student-learning assessment and program review are beginning to take root. There is renewed willingness to embrace innovative methods and modalities in the quest to improve student learning in the classroom and less suspicion and fear of the motives of senior administrators in advocating such processes. The IEC has taken a bold step in acknowledging that the previous program review guidelines were flawed and needed improvement. Risk-taking in academia is rare so their initiative should be applauded.

With new guidelines in place and a nascent culture of assessment, Pacific can now develop a systematic and sustainable program review process. The new guidelines have received tentative approval as a pilot for the next two years but they have not been formally adopted by the faculty; the latest schedule of reviews only gets underway in the fall 2012; and the new Director of Institutional Effectiveness does not commence work until this summer 2012. The new spirit of

assessment that is afoot must be allowed to take hold in the sinews of the institution. This spirit was lacking during the CPR visit but there are promising signs that Pacific has turned the corner.

Despite these optimistic signs, the team was disappointed to find that little progress had been made in program review in the two years since the CPR visit. The team is aware that change in academia is slow. But if Pacific is to meet its strategic goals and external accreditation standards, the pace of change will need to be accelerated. With new senior leadership and reinvigorated mechanisms of faculty governance, conditions are in place to move forward with greater alacrity on a number of issues. Of concern to the visiting team was the fact that the new IEC is only a two-year pilot and the program review guidelines will be subject yet again to another review in two years' time. Continuous review and tinkering with processes will not allow Pacific to gather and analyze comparable and reliable longitudinal data for program review and assessment that is central to its future success. WASC will soon need to see detailed results from actual program reviews under the new guidelines in order to analyze the effectiveness of the new review process as a whole.

As well as implementing new program review guidelines, the IEC also constructed a new schedule for program review. The Program Review Schedule approved by the IEC on February 13, 2012 outlines a seven-year cycle for all academic programs, administrative units and centers and institutes at Pacific through September 2018. However, the schedule is not balanced in terms of numbers – there are nine academic reviews in September 2012, seven in September 2013 and seven in September 2014. Some of these academic reviews include whole schools (e.g., Engineering, Conservatory of Music, etc.). By contrast, there are only four reviews in September 2015 and three in September 2016. Given that there are also administrative and center/institute reviews at the same time, the front-loading of the academic program reviews in the new schedule does seem to impose a heavy workload on the new Director of Institutional Effectiveness at a very early stage in his tenure. Furthermore, while it is laudable that Pacific

is attempting to institute a comprehensive program review process across its campuses, it is curious that student leadership programs, diversity requirements and other programs are included in the schedule of academic program review when the initial focus should be on academic degree granting programs.

There are two areas, however, where program review processes are moving in a very positive direction. The first is the Division of Student Life, which should be commended for developing its own set of guidelines (based on the program standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS]). These are working well; the Division has added to and developed its assessment and program review efforts since the last WASC visit in 2010. Their efforts are comprehensive, thoughtful and well-presented and they clearly have achieved a high level of staff commitment to the process. The visiting team was very impressed by and deeply appreciative of the poster sessions organized on its behalf by the Division. Furthermore, there is an enviable level of transparency to their efforts – all self-studies, reports, and recommendations are available as public documents on their website. (CFR's 2.1; 2.4; 2.7; 3.8; 3.11; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.7; 4.8)

The second area of program review and assessment that shows promise is in the professional schools. Given the imperatives of external accreditation, most schools have well-developed systems in place to assess their programs and student learning. The Eberhardt School of Business went through accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in 2008 and will begin the re-accreditation process in 2013; the Conservatory of Music went through accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) in 2007 and will begin the re-accreditation process in 2014; the Thomas Long School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences went through accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy

Education (ACPE) in 2010; the Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry is accredited with the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA); the Benard School of Education is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE); and the McGeorge School of Law is accredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) and the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). All of these agencies have detailed specifications for review and the assessment or assurance of student learning.

In many instances, the review processes within the professional schools have become quite sophisticated and detailed, although it is surprising that the schools have not done more to share best practices with each other or with the rest of the University. Furthermore, it is very clear that the professional schools are just beginning to consider how accreditation data might be used in program review and they are also wrestling with the issue of how to align their accreditation efforts with University learning outcomes. Much of their assessment, however, is aimed at the performance of individual students with relatively little consideration given as to how this individual-level data might be made useful at the program level. Thus, there is a rich history of assessment in the professional schools that might become a valuable resource for the rest of Pacific.

One important bottleneck to the future success of program review is the lack of capacity in the Office of Institutional Research. As Pacific moves forward with student learning assessment and program review, increasing demands for data will be placed on Institutional Research and others from administrators, staff and faculty. This data must be available in a timely fashion and in a form that makes it easily intelligible and helpful to the user. Without improved infrastructural capacity, it will be difficult for Pacific to achieve its objectives in the areas of student learning assessment, program review, advising, faculty workloads and student success.

## ***II-D Other Issues Arising from the Standards***

### ***Governance and Leadership***

Pacific finds itself with a relatively new president, a new provost, an interim vice president of development, a new dean of the Business School, and a new Chief Information Officer. With this new leadership, the Commission encouraged Pacific to focus on three important matters.

As the July 2010 WASC Commission letter makes clear, Pacific has an opportunity to make “a very complicated (even dense) organization pattern” more efficient and accountable. A balance must be sought between the sometimes centralized and sometimes decentralized management of the University. This includes developing a vision and plan for providing oversight and coordination amount the units of the three-campus structure. (CFR’s 1.3, 3.8, 4.1)

Now that Pacific has filled most its key cabinet positions, the work of addressing the organization structure has begun in earnest. The Provost’s Office was reorganized and now includes a new position of Vice Provost, with oversight of university-wide programs, international programs, faculty affairs and inclusivity and diversity which should focus issues into a central place for resolution and will bring more consistency to the operation and organization of all Pacific campuses. (CFR’s 1.3, 1.5, 3.8, 4.4)

Several planning process are now active to address and coordinate planning, budgeting, efficiency and prioritization in a more integrated way which will be valuable in shaping the future of Pacific. Since the CPR visit, Pacific has also added a Director of Institutional Effectiveness position that will chair the new Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC). The IEC assumes responsibility for reviewing the quality of the academic and operational efforts at Pacific. This committee will assess the effectiveness of all programs at Pacific including academic, co-curricular and administrative programs at all three campuses. They will assess those programs whether they span one or multiple campuses and whether they are centralized or decentralized, providing input to make programs more effective as either a standalone

program or coordinated across the three campuses. This process will be based upon evidence provided by a self-study team that will include those nearest to the process and an external reviewer. The IEC assessment of these program reviews is presented to and discussed at Cabinet, and incorporates budget recommendations that are shared with a university wide budget committee, the Institutional Priorities Committee (IPC). (CFR's 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

Pacific's strategy to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative services and organizations, whether they span one or multiple campuses and whether they are centralized or decentralized, is to conduct simultaneous reviews of similar functionalities or complementary should provide data to rethink organization structures and reporting relationships. The team admires Pacific's commitment to thoroughly analyze their operations; but this is not a project that will be completed in a short period of time. (CFR 3.8)

### ***Planning Processes***

The University began a strategic planning process in fall 2011 that should be completed within a year. Many important decisions await the results of the closely related processes of strategic planning, accreditation review, budget system remodeling, and institutional effectiveness. Their goal is to develop a new strategic plan that gives Pacific more options and is more resilient to external changes, supported by a corresponding financial plan, school-level strategic plans, and an implementation and assessment framework. All of these activities will allow Pacific to redesign its administrative structures and to address the administrative challenges identified in the Commission's action letter. (CFR's 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

The Commission letter also stated that, "...the current situation in which there is a president emeritus who reports to the chairman of the board, rather than to you as president, is not in keeping with Commission Standards or common practice....Moreover, the lack of specific job requirements and responsibilities for the position of president emeritus is especially difficult to understand, and could lead

to significant leadership issues in the future if not attended to early on.” The Board of Regents has amended the University’s bylaws to allow for a president emeritus position and clarified that this president emeritus reports to the president. The post-presidency agreement between the University and the current president emeritus has been revised to specify this reporting relationship and had already specified job requirements and responsibilities. (CFR’s 1.3, 3.8, 3.10)

### ***Budgetary System and Financial Sustainability***

As noted in the Interim Report, currently “there are different budgetary allocation models at the University,” and a task force has been formed to study budgetary models and recommend a new budget allocation system. The goal is that “all units of the university will operate under the new budgetary allocation system, regardless of geographic location.” According to the Interim Report “the budget system transition will occur over several years,” and once adopted “two parallel budgetary systems will be in place for the first year.” The panel cautions that running a parallel budget could overtax the University, and recommends that UOP move quickly through the beta process. (CFR’s 1.3, 3.8, 4.2, .4.4)

Additionally, the action letter directed attention to the budgetary system. “The intention to move to an alternative budgetary system, as described by you to the panel, may have significant implications to the institution. Given the significance of the possible change, it will be important for the university to include in its EER report a description of the planned budgetary system and an evaluation of its effectiveness, if implemented at that stage.” (CFR’s 1.3, 3.8, 4.4)

The President created a Budget Task Force to review the University’s current budget model, study and evaluate alternative budget models, and recommend a new unified budget model that will both incentivize and hold accountable the University’s budget units. After a year into this work, the task force has reviewed the numerous budget models currently in use at Pacific, brought in outside consultants to provide an even broader understanding of alternative budget systems and has evaluated the pros and

cons of the various models. Pacific expects to hire a consultant to assist with implementing a new system, but have decided to postpone a decision until the strategic planning process is completed next fall. The thought is that the results of the strategic plan should be used to drive budget decisions and, therefore, the budget system. Pacific intends to transition to a new system over several years and to run concurrent systems for some period of time and will be completed in 2015. (CFR's 1.3, 3.8, 4.2, 4.4)

Meanwhile, while all the planning and preparation for new budget and planning systems goes on, Pacific continues to manage its finances in an exemplary manner and has weathered the financial crisis well. Pacific continues to produce annual operating surpluses, provided modest salary increases to faculty and staff and has not had to make significant reductions to their existing budget; accomplishments that many of their peers envy. Pacific's endowment has now recovered to its pre-financial crisis level. Pacific continues to build new buildings and renovate old buildings. As a matter of fact, the University purchased a building in San Francisco for \$47 million since the last visit that will allow the San Francisco campus to expand its programmatic offerings as well as providing space for three city initiatives. (CFR 3.5)

### **SECTION III – FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

The team's commendations and recommendations should be seen in the context of Pacific's recent history. Pacific faced a set of critical financial and enrollment challenges that threatened its viability in the early 1990's. It is no small feat to move any academically diverse institution forward, let alone one with a presence in three different cities. Pacific rebounded in remarkable fashion, setting it on a strong upward trajectory. The upward curve has been marked by Pacific's commitment to core values and its message to prospective students that stresses the breadth and distinctiveness of its academic offerings in the context of a personalized learning environment similar to that of a selective liberal arts college.

### **III-A Commendations**

1. Pacific's very engaged Board of Regents and its administration are commended for accepting and implementing changes recommended by the CPR visiting team. Pacific is a complex place and the changes to the administrative organization certainly make the institution more understandable and the Board more fully accountable. The team urges constant vigilance to simplicity and transparency in practice.
2. Pacific continues to manage its finances in an exemplary manner and has weathered the national financial crisis well. The University continues to produce annual operating surpluses, provide modest salary increases to staff and faculty and the University has not had to make significant reductions to existing budget lines. These accomplishments are the envy of Pacific's peers.
3. Pacific's commitment to undergraduate research and experiential learning are points of pride. The team congratulates and commends the campus community on both.
4. Pacific is focused on the issue of student success, which includes retention and persistence to graduation. Achieving this goal begins with an institution-wide commitment to the student, and it is clear that Pacific understands this. Much progress has been made since the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) in 2010. Indeed, Pacific is performing at or above some of its peer institutions, but still not at the level it (and the team) believes it could. In fact, the team believes this could be an area of distinction where Pacific could be a model of inclusive excellence.
5. The team commends Student Life for their energetic and creative leadership in the practice of assessment across their many offices and programs, and for their continued excellence in creating a culture of evidence to inform practice and programs to improve student learning and educational effectiveness.

6. The team commends Pacific's new initiatives to improve transfer student success at Pacific.
7. The team believes an excellent Diversity Plan is emerging from the Strategic Taskforce on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence and recommends that it become part of the very fabric of Pacific and an integral part of Pacific's upcoming, university-wide Strategic Plan.
8. Pacific has come a very long way in developing a culture in support of learning assessment and an articulated commitment to evidence-based decision-making. The team found the level of discourse among faculty, deans, and academic staff to be far more nuanced and sophisticated than two years prior. Their progress is admirable but the journey must continue apace.
9. The Assessment Working Group (AWG) has brought leadership, commitment, and informed practice to Pacific. This group will foster dialogue and help strengthen a culture of learning assessment across the campus. The team commends the AWG as a whole for culturally astute and caring attention to student learning at the program level and at the institutional level.
10. Many of Pacific's schools, particularly those with separate, concurrent accreditation, are commended for their strategies to assess student learning at the program level. Some of these are emerging practices; some are more thoroughly developed. In each case, these schools have devised plans for using learning outcomes assessment and providing feedback to faculty. Support for the work is a shared investment of faculty and deans' offices. In some cases professional schools have collaborated to learn from each other. Such collaboration should be both commended and lifted up as a model for the institution. The College of the Pacific must engage deeply, in a similar manner, with alacrity.
11. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) should be commended for its innovative work on program review in a short time. It is hoped they can continue their work well into the future

### **III-B Recommendations**

#### ***Governance and University Leadership***

1. Under the leadership of the most senior levels of the administration, the team recommends that Pacific pursue diversity relentlessly to be reflective of its local community and the composition of the Pacific family. (CFR's 1.3, 1.5, 2.10, 3.2, 4.5)

#### ***Faculty and Workload***

2. A careful and candid conversation within the Pacific academic community needs to take place to understand faculty workload, its impact on students and those who teach them. Transparency, peer data analysis and broad engagement are warranted. A clear and consistent policy needs to be crafted for faculty workload so that there is a sense that faculty across the schools and the campuses are being treated equitably. The team understands that Pacific's Academic Council and administrative leadership are examining this and urges a swift resolution. (CFR's 2.1, 3.1, 3.3,)

#### ***Theme I – Student Success***

3. In the matter of student retention, Pacific must determine the reasons – based on evidence – for the fact it is not meeting its own goals. Understanding what is impeding success is critical for students and their experience at Pacific. The team does not believe the “serious conversation” about diversity has achieved traction – yet. Pacific's work with its demographically unique Asian community is deeply admirable but its success in reaching out to Latino/a and African-American students is inadequate and not reflective of the needs of the community it serves. Pacific is encouraged to identify best practices from aspirant peers and national models, establish benchmarks and goals, and refocus efforts on the persistence, retention and graduation rates of African-American and Latino/a students to further enhance student success. (CFR's 1.2, 1.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14, 4.5)

4. The team urges Pacific to review and assess its advisement system, including both faculty and peer advising systems, to ensure quality and to improve student success for undergraduates. Attention should be given to the Financial Aid Office and its services and how it provides student support. This is true particularly in the areas of customer service, transparency, processes for greater efficiency, use of technology, integration of best practices, and student-staff interactions. (CFR's 2.11, 2.12, 2.13)

### ***Theme II – Assessment of Student Learning***

5. Pacific has developed innovative forms of learning assessment in the Pacific Seminars (PACS) portion of its General Education program. The same level of innovation ought to be extended to enrich the whole of the GE program. This is a critical issue in American higher education generally and for WASC specifically. Its importance should not be underestimated. In relation to student success, student learning assessment in developmental courses should be enhanced. With regard to low performing students who are at-risk, evidence-based interventions and actions are needed. (CFR's 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 4.5)

### ***Theme III – Program Review***

6. If there is a single theme that the team would like to make very clear to Pacific's faculty and administration, it is the importance of systematic and robust processes of quality assurance. Pacific must move quickly to embrace a model of program review that coheres not only with WASC standards but to its own unique academic profile. All recommendations in this document are equally important; however, this one is first among equals. Finally, demands in the institutional research area have increased exponentially with administrators, staff and faculty making more and more requests for data. Pacific should expand its capacity in institutional research. With a more robust information infrastructure, Pacific will achieve a greater degree of intentional integration to its efforts in student success, student learning assessment and program review. (1.2, 2.7, 3.8, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

**CREDIT HOUR REVIEW - TEAM REPORT APPENDIX**

Institution: University of the Pacific

Type of Visit: EER

Date: April 3, 2012

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all CPR, EER and Initial Accreditation Visits. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</b>	<b>Verified Yes/No</b>
Policy on credit hour	Does this policy adhere to WASC policy and federal regulations?	Yes
	Comments: The Credit Hour Policy states 15 hours direct faculty instruction per unit of semester credit (FHB 11.10). Each unit is further assumed to generate a minimum of 30 hours of additional outside-of-class work (2 hours per week during a traditional 15 week semester or equivalent). (approved Academic Affairs 3.1.12)	
Process(es)/ periodic review	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)?	Yes
	Comments: Primary monitoring responsibility for courses rests with department chairs and/or academic unit administrators who have oversight responsibility for those courses. The Center for Professional and Continuing Education may provide support and assistance for monitoring to academic units for online and blended/hybrid courses. All new courses are evaluated by a process which includes departmental and college reviews, academic committee reviews including Academic Affairs and other appropriate committees (See <u>Faculty Handbook, 11.4 Curriculum Changes</u> ). This review process includes justification of the requested units to be assigned to the courses based on the definition(s) for what constitutes a credit hour relative to the expected learning activities to be performed by students. Formal monitoring occurs as a part of the regular Program Review process which includes evaluation of the appropriate allocation of units assigned to all coursework (See <u>Faculty Handbook, 10.2 Review of Academic Programs</u> ).	
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
	Comments: All new courses are reviewed by the department, unit and Academic Affairs and justification of unit credit hours is a part of this review at each level. Attached are the results of the unit based audits completed in Spring semester 2012.	
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?	Yes
	Comments: Spring 2012 schedule attached	

Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses	<p>What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Online</p> <p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 4</p> <p>What degree level(s)? Undergraduate BA, BS</p> <p>What discipline(s)? Education, Physics, Business, Organizational behavior</p>	
	<p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?</p>	Yes
	<p>Comments: Numbers of syllabi reviewed are small but have general compliance. All on-line courses are required to be reviewed thru the same curricular process even for a course approved in a different delivery format (e.g. traditional direct faculty instruction in-seat proposed to be offered on-line). This ensures a review of credit hour in each delivery format.</p>	
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)	<p>What kinds of courses? Lecture, lab, seminar, discussion, experiential, clinic, activity courses, studio</p> <p>How many syllabi were reviewed? 165 (27 syllabi attached)</p> <p>What degree level(s)? BA, BS, MS, Professional Degree</p> <p>What discipline(s)? All Schools and The College. Within The College, all divisions have course representation.</p>	
	<p>Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?</p>	Yes
	<p>Comments:</p>	