

REPORT OF THE WSCUC TEAM
For Reaffirmation of Accreditation

To
Holy Names University

22-24 March 2016

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The team evaluated the institution under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). 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 WSCUC website.

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A. Description of Institution and Reaccreditation Process

Holy Names University (HNU) was founded in 1868 by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM), a Roman Catholic religious congregation. HNU was originally situated on the shores of Lake Merritt in Oakland, California and focused on the preparation of young women to meet the congregation's need for qualified teachers for the schools under its jurisdiction.

Initially known as the Convent of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the institution began offering post-secondary educational programs in 1908 and changed its name to Convent and College of the Holy Names. In 1956 the college was separately incorporated from the convent as College of the Holy Names. HNU became a charter member of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) in 1949. In 1957, the college relocated to its present sixty-acre site in the Oakland Hills about 2.5 miles southeast of the Montclair district. In 1971 the college became coeducational and shortened its name to Holy Names College, and finally Holy Names University in 2004.

Several sisters who teach, serve in administration, or volunteer their time to work with students maintain the presence of the founding congregation. According to the mission statement the university is rooted in the Catholic tradition and guided by the core values of the founding congregation. The vision statement encourages responsiveness to opportunities and challenges through an ongoing commitment to the liberating action, courage, and integrity characteristic of the SNJM charism. Plaques identifying SNJM values are displayed throughout the campus as visible reminders of the genesis of the core values of HNU.

HNU has experienced significant changes since its last accreditation reaffirmation in 2005. The current president was appointed in 2010 as the first lay-president. The majority of the president's cabinet has almost completely turned over since 2005. In 2006, the current Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, and the current Vice President for Academic Affairs were appointed. In 2011, the institution hired its current Vice President for Development and added the current Vice President for Administration and Finance in July 2015. Only the Vice President for Mission Effectiveness was on the cabinet during the previous WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) visit. Three cabinet members who were at HNU for the interim report (2009) are still with the institution.

The university currently offers 19 baccalaureate degree programs, 4 adult baccalaureate degree completion programs, 18 minors, 16 certificate and credential programs, and 9 graduate programs in weekday, weekend, and evening schedules. A limited number of distance education degree programs are also available. The university

boasts of its small class sizes and personalized culture. The most popular undergraduate programs are business administration, nursing and psychology. In May 2015, HNU conferred 94 bachelor's degrees, 82 master's degrees, and 6 credential/certificates. HNU also offers a full range of co-curricular programs, including 14 intercollegiate athletic teams that compete in the Pacific West Conference. HNU is currently a third year candidacy member of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division II.

Since 2005, HNU has added seven undergraduate majors and graduate degrees, one of which (Pastoral Ministries) is a distance education program. In addition, substantial facilities renovation projects to areas such as the heating system, electrical system, and water and irrigation systems have been completed since the last accreditation visit. These changes have proven to be more environmentally sustainable and have significantly lowered related utilities costs by a reported 17% and reducing water usage by 40%.

HNU attracts a diverse student body and was recognized in 2014 as the most diverse university in the nation by *U.S. News and World Report* and *America's Best Colleges*. Roughly 80% of HNU's undergraduates are from underrepresented populations; 36 nations are represented in the student body. Of the 753 students in the 2014 class, 27% were first generation college students.

Accreditation History

HNU has been accredited by WSCUC since 1949. WSCUC most recently reaffirmed HNU's accreditation in 2005 for ten years. Since this reaffirmation, HNU was required to submit an Interim Report (March 1, 2009) that responded to the issues identified in the Commission action letter of June 2005: (1) sustaining and reporting the resources of the university, (2) continuing to improve the learning of HNU students, and (3) transitioning into university status.

In response to HNU's 2009 report, the Commission received the report, proceeded with the reaffirmation cycle and commended HNU for its ongoing attention to external economic conditions in light of their effect on the financial well-being of the institution; making progress in financial planning, including the quality of the financial model used; maintaining institutional flexibility that adjusts target goals as it receives new information; recognizing the need for ongoing reassessment of the viability of the adult undergraduate program; and acknowledging that moving from college to university status requires increased focus on faculty research and creative activity. It also recommended that HNU (1) design and develop program review processes that lead to enhanced academic quality in individual departments and programs (CFR 4.2), (2) continue to focus on linking academic program reviews to HNU's mission and strategic plan to further advance towards "holistic or total assessment" (CFR 2.7), (3) support the scholarly and creative work of faculty and encourage undergraduate involvement in the research process (CFRs 2.8,2.9), (4) create a

separate Strategic Retention Plan that is independent of and goes beyond the retention discussion in the Strategic Enrollment Plan (CFR 1.2).

B. Description of Team's Review Process

The WSCUC reaffirmation team met in October 2015 to conduct the Offsite Review (OSR). The team identified three major Lines of Inquiry: 1) creating an institutional culture of assessment, 2) institution-wide data-driven decision-making, and 3) financial health and institutional stability. Additional documents related to finances and governance structures were requested and provided. The team identified a broad cross-section of stakeholders and institutional voices to interview during the March Accreditation Visit (AV), and the institution graciously accommodated all requests and provided access to a confidential e-mail account for all university constituents. Institutional documents to support federal requirements for such elements as credit hour and transfer policies, were reviewed and verified. Interviews with the team were well-attended, and the information provided confirmed what the team saw in materials provided for review.

The team did not conduct reviews of any distance education programs or off-campus locations, nor was there any special follow-up related to substantive change in connection with this visit.

C. Institution's Reaccreditation Report and Update: Quality and Rigor of the Report and Supporting Evidence

Preparation for the AV and the WSCUC institutional report fell under the purview of the Institutional Planning Council (IPC), which was comprised of the president, vice presidents and representative faculty, staff and students. The IPC, ordinarily charged with providing input into strategic planning decisions and the annual budget, was deemed the obvious choice to serve as the reaffirmation steering committee. The IPC appropriately engaged members of the university community in preparing the report. It met twice monthly and held two retreats exclusively dedicated to preparing for reaffirmation.

The report was comprehensive, coherent, well written, and directly addressed each of the eight components. It appropriately identified two major institutional challenges: student retention and the need to develop more robust processes for assessing the achievement of student learning outcomes (SLOs) and using that data for future decision-making. The team judged that HNU's long-term financial sustainability should be recognized as a third major overarching challenge facing the institution. Materials requested by the team were provided as a follow-up to the OSR. Additional interviews were readily accommodated in preparation for the AV to provide the information and perspective

necessary for the team to gain a complete understanding of the condition of the university's financial situation.

The team found the report to be very helpful in guiding their understanding of the issues faced by HNU. Data provided generally supported claims, but it also confirmed the teams concern with the institution's ability to gather, analyze, and use data for significant strategic planning and assessment purposes. The institution raised good reflective questions and dealt forthrightly with concerns. Although student voices were not significantly evidenced in the report, preparations seemed to otherwise include an appropriately broad university constituency. Members of the institution generally seemed aware of the reaffirmation process and demonstrated an appropriate level of engagement during the visit.

SECTION II – EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ESSAYS

Component 1: Response to previous Commission actions

The team was unable to find evidence of a strategic enrollment plan or a written retention plan as recommended in the 2009 Commission action letter, nor did it appear to the team that as much progress as might be expected had been made towards designing and developing program review processes that lead to enhanced academic quality in individual departments and programs. The team found evidence of a program review process, although there was little evidence available to suggest the process is being successfully used to advance "holistic assessment," to enhance academic quality or drive strategic planning.

In May 2015, HNU notified WSCUC of a breach of CFR 2.2b and 2.6 in its Culture and Spirituality Master's program. The then-director is no longer at the institution. An interim director has been charged with and has begun to re-structure the program, effectively implementing a new process for cross-checking and verifying the completion of culminating projects for each master's program at the institution. (CFR 1.8)

Component 2: Compliance with the Standards and federal requirements; Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators

Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 1.

Institutional Purposes

HNU has a mission and vision that reflects its distinctive tradition as a Catholic University inspired by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, the founding religious congregation (CFR 1.1). HNU's mission is supported by a set of values that are broadly and enthusiastically supported by trustees, faculty, staff, and students and that include a commitment to promoting social justice, to educating underrepresented populations, and to serving the poor. Institutional learning outcomes are prominently stated on the university website; and information related to student achievement, retention and graduation, and other consumer information as required by Higher Education Information Act (HEOA) is also linked to the website and easily accessible (CFR 1.2). HNU is a model institution from the perspective of purposefully maintaining a richly diverse university community, responding to the needs of the local community, and contributing to the common good.

Integrity and Transparency

HNU's policies and procedures for faculty, staff and students are clearly written and easily available online. The institution's policy on academic freedom is published in the faculty handbook and endorses the standard American Association of University Professors (AAUP) statement on that key issue (CFR 1.3). The administration currently operates in a transparent and participatory style that encourages small interactive group meetings. The president has regular open-door hours and welcomes any member of the HNU community to come by to discuss matters of concern (CFR 1.6). The purpose of the Institutional Planning Council is clearly laid out in the IPC bylaws as a vehicle for shared governance. Faculty, staff, and student senates, along with the IPC, share representational responsibility for providing insight into planning and budgetary concerns that inform university decision-making (CFR 1.7).

The institution's primary purpose (CFR 1.5) is to offer a liberal arts and professional education in a "progressive, inclusive, and rigorous academic community" (Institutional Mission Statement). Institutional awareness of its exceptional diversity was readily apparent during the AV, and the dedication of many faculty, staff and administrators to meeting the needs of such a community was laudable. The team heard numerous testimonies to the level of commitment and care students felt. Steps have been taken to provide ongoing support to faculty in particular to address effectively the needs of underserved and, in some cases, under-prepared students; however, this is an area that will require continued attention if HNU is to serve its diverse study body well. Continuous attention should also be paid to diversity within the faculty and staff to assure that all feel valued and equally heard as contributing members of the community (CFR 1.4).

Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 2.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are at the core of the Holy Names experience. HNU's Program Review Committee (PRC), a standing committee of the faculty senate, ensures the university's educational programs are appropriate in content, standards of performance, and rigor (CFR 2.1). The requirements for degrees and the levels of achievement necessary for graduation are clearly articulated in HNU's catalog and are differentiated for the undergraduate and graduate degree programs (CFR 2.2a, 2.2b). HNU is committed to appropriate instructional staffing levels and to providing a greater breadth of curriculum in some programs, particularly those at the graduate level in which only a single full-time faculty member may hold a terminal degree in the field (CFR 2.1).

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all undergraduate and nearly all graduate degree programs are developed, and assessment plans are in place for each. Efforts are underway to ensure greater consistency in conducting assessment, reporting results, and utilizing the results for program improvement. HNU faculty complete annual assessments in degree programs and, in most cases, make the assessment reports available to internal and external stakeholders through the institutional website, via Taskstream, a cloud-based assessment and data collection and reporting tool. Curriculum mapping is underway in many programs, and most instructors include SLOs on course syllabi; however, participation in this process is uneven and there seem to be few consequences for faculty who elect not to engage fully in assessment (CFR 2.4). Additional institutional efforts to keep students generally informed of course objectives and assessment results may be helpful in further embedding an institutional culture of assessment (CFR 2.5). HNU's work related to establishing general education and institutional learning outcomes, including the core competencies required by WSCUC, is nascent; assessment was scheduled to begin in fall 2015 (CFR 2.2a, 2.6), but data collection has been minimal.

HNU has strong support services designed to enhance learning for all its students, including the opportunity for students to develop individualized learning plans with the aid of the Students of Concern Committee. The university has intentionally linked its institutional learning outcomes across academic and co-curricular student experiences (CFR 2.5, 2.8). Recently, a process for program review has been established at HNU. External program reviews occur every five years, and (since 2014) the reviews include assessment reports of student learning outcomes as well as data related to student enrollment, retention, and completion (CFR 2.7). The Program Review Committee (PRC), using an

institutional rubric to assure quality and consistency (CFR 2.4, 2.7), internally evaluates program reviews. The PRC also makes recommendations based on assessment evidence to align with institutional priorities (CFR 4.1, 4.2). The team urges HNU to maintain its 5-year cycle of program review and to ensure that the program review process includes a clear action plan that is developed, implemented, and assessed for impact. For programs such as nursing that have external licensure and certification requirements, HNU is urged to continue to develop responsive means of tracking licensing and professional placement outcomes (CFR 2.7).

Scholarship and Creative Activity

HNU has various resources to support scholarship, creative activity, and instructional innovations for students and, to an arguably lesser degree, for faculty (CFR 2.8). The university has invested in innovations such as the Success and Retention Committee and the Advising and Learning Resources Center, and has implemented high-impact practices such as numerous community-based learning opportunities and the Connections Project for first-year students (CFR 2.8, 2.9, 2.11). Efforts have been made to more firmly establish intercollegiate athletics as a powerful co-curricular opportunity, although the need to house a number of these opportunities off campus provides some level of challenge. Assessment of the impact of many co-curricular opportunities in advancing institutional learning outcomes has not yet been firmly established (CFR 2.11), and HNU may benefit from coordinated efforts to align and evaluate these efforts.

Faculty standards for promotion and tenure are clearly articulated, and efforts have been made to facilitate faculty development through pedagogy workshops, help with curriculum design and assessment, and enhanced research and scholarship support. The efforts of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning have been instrumental in this. Faculty learning communities and HNU's annual dean's conference help apprise faculty of best practices in higher-education along a range of dimensions.

Teaching and service loads described as "heavy" remain a concern among the HNU community as those loads may impact faculty's scholarly productivity. Faculty who work more extensively with at risk, underserved, and underprepared students feel the impact of the service load keenly, particularly if this additional service is not recognized (CFR 2.8). The team noted that a number of faculty and administrators lauded efforts to improve communication related to institutional decision-making in the face of enrollment pressure and constrained resources (CFR 2.9). The team likewise noted that more must be done to engage faculty and staff consistently in decision-making processes and to continue open communication about institutional challenges and opportunities.

Student Learning and Success

An essential priority at HNU is student success. The standards and requirements for degree completion are clearly documented in the HNU catalog and seem to be accurately conveyed by admission office materials, website materials, faculty mentors, the advising center, the registrar's office, and the personnel that staff various support services; however, consistent attention to student understanding of these requirements and equitable access to this information is always warranted. The team did find some evidence that some students had encountered difficulty in getting accurate information about degree completion requirements (CFR 2.12). HNU has established a transfer taskforce to improve its articulation agreements to facilitate the admission and completion of transfer students with minimal loss of prior credits (CFR 2.14). There was some evidence to suggest that orientation for transfer students may be a bit uneven and that some may not feel as informed as first time freshman, whose orientation experience seems very thorough.

HNU's mission is also reflected in its adult degree completion programs in psychology, business, and liberal studies, all programs that support adult learners in their pursuit of a bachelor's degree. Faculty and staff share a clear commitment to the health and well-being of students at every level, and many referred to the institution as a family that concerns itself not only with students' progress to degree, but also with students' personal growth. HNU evidenced its support of the needs of students in numerous ways: institutional services such as individualized learning plans, free tutoring, the Advising and Learning Resources Center, and the Applications of Learning Theory course. These interventions appear more firmly established and utilized by traditional-aged undergraduate students than among graduate students and those in the adult baccalaureate programs (CFR 2.13). HNU tracks aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data related to timely progress at all degree levels (CFR 2.10), but administrators noted a need to gather more consistent and meaningful data to track those in the adult degree completion programs.

HNU is also committed to better understanding how students perceive their experience at the university and is exploring new means of acquiring these data. The team cautions against relying solely on indirect measures of students' satisfaction with their academic programs, personal growth, student services, and professional preparation as the response rates on these self-report surveys at HNU have been extremely low (CFR 2.10, 2.13). As reliable data are obtained, HNU may benefit from coordinated efforts to identify the impact of retention and student success strategies across the institution. This includes bolstering the capacity of the institutional research office such that data is reliable and readily available to inform decision-making and institutional priorities.

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

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 3.

Faculty and Staff

HNU currently employs adequate numbers of qualified faculty and staff to support students enrolled in academic and co-curricular programming at both undergraduate and graduate levels with faculty to student ratios that would appear to support the attention required for success of students as diverse as those at HNU (CFR 3.1). Of the 359 employees, only 35% reflect the diversity of the student population, perhaps contributing to a possible unevenness in informal advisory loads (CFR 3.1). Staff and faculty evaluations are required and are performed each year (CFR 3.2). The institution's salary scale may pose a sustainability issue for both faculty and staff, particularly as many of the senior team, including many of the Sisters of Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, and full-time faculty near retirement age. Turnover among staff and leadership in particular may be in part a consequence of this salary scale, and the institution may be well-served to investigate this possible connection further. HNU reported that they are working towards a succession plan, but without addressing issues of load and salaries developing a viable plan may be challenging (CFRs 3.1 and 3.2).

Faculty development funds are limited, but numerous faculty development "in-service" sessions have been conducted on site with existing resources through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). The CETL offers one-on-one training as well as group training sessions related to the available instructional technologies, curriculum design, teaching methodologies and more. HNU has determined that additional staff development is necessary, and a plan to put these development activities in place is being explored. Plans to foster a robust culture of faculty and staff development are also named specifically in HNU's strategic plan, which includes targeted fundraising towards this goal (CFRs 3.3 and 3.5).

Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources (CFRs 3.4.and 3.5)

The institution had a history of unrestricted net asset increases from 2009-10 through 2013-14; however, the total decrease in unrestricted net assets at the end of the 2015 fiscal year negated these increases. The current projection for the 2015-16 of just over \$5 million will bring the institution's total unrestricted asset base down to approximately \$6.6 million, a total decrease of more than \$8 million over the most recent two years. The decline of these unrestricted net assets has had a negative impact on the key ratios used to determine the institution's overall fiscal health.

Cash flow from operations appears to have trended to a slight positive until the 2013-14 year. Sufficient operating cash continues to be a challenge for the institution, especially over the summer months when tuition payments slow considerably. The school relies upon borrowing from the endowment to bridge the cash shortfalls it experiences during these periods. HNU also has access to an unsecured line of credit to further bridge the cash shortfalls experienced during the year. HNU received a large estate gift from a donor this year. This unrestricted gift will allow HNU additional borrowing capability from the endowment, which may be necessary to address this year's large projected deficit. The Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA) understands that borrowing from the endowment should only be considered a temporary solution until HNU is able to bring its operations back to profitability.

The institution ranks its fiscal performance through the use of the Composite Financial Index (CFI) scoring tool. For the past four years, HNU has held an average positive score of about 2, but the current year's negative score corresponds to a ranking that suggests the institution "Consider structured programs to conserve cash and assess viability to survive." In general terms, a CFI score of 3 is the threshold of institutional financial health, while a score of less than 3 indicates a need for serious attention to the institution's financial condition. To bring HNU's score back into the positive, the institution must take seriously the need to bring its operations back to sustainable profitability.

HNU has met the minimum U.S. Department of Education composite score of 1.5 necessary to receive federal funds. Given the recent and significant projected shortfalls in unrestricted operations, however, HNU would be wise to continue to calculate this score each year and begin to provide the results and an explanation of their meaning to the Finance/Audit Committees for additional transparency.

The institution has debt in the form of tax-exempt bonds. The institution has grown both its temporarily restricted and permanently restricted net assets by \$3.3 and \$2.2 million respectively. The new major gift received this year should allow these asset categories to continue to grow; however, this growth of assets may not significantly contribute to the overall "unrestricted operations" of the institution where the majority of the cash is currently needed.

Although progress towards sound financial management has occurred during the past five years, the unfortunate downturn in enrollment resulting in a significant unrestricted loss last year, and the current projected unrestricted loss this year has put the institution in a fiscally challenged position relative to operations. The revised budget plan incorporates these decreases and proposes to offset the decreases through increased revenues and additional cost containment. The five-year model currently forecasts profitable operations at fiscal yearend 2018. Budget development now follows a formal best practice and includes the key stakeholders. The Administration and Finance Committee will monitor

the progress of the revised budget plan. The team suggests that this monitoring be shared with the IPC in order to include perspectives from a broader range of stakeholders. This is an important step and should allow for a thorough review and discussion of the projected available resources and any possible reductions of expenditures necessary in order to continue to allow the institution to move forward and meet its most important operating demands and educational commitments (CFR 3.4).

Among those commitments will be attention to the physical plant itself. The institution performs routine maintenance on the buildings, but has not yet conducted a facility assessment to determine its additional deferred maintenance backlog. In various interviews, the team determined there was a need for both an internal and external facility assessment to determine how much that backlog might be. Although the institution is generally responsive to the need for facility innovations, concerns surfaced about fiscal capacity to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance requirements in light of the age and topographic layout of the campus (CFR 3.5).

The campus Information Technology (IT) infrastructure has been confirmed by both internal and external consultants to be sufficient to meet the need of current as well as projected enrollment over the next 5 years; however, insufficient storage space requires movement to a cloud-based source in 2016. Currently, each program area of the institution is assigned a set amount of IT budget that can be used for various IT related purchases; however, efforts are currently underway to pull these budgeted funds away from the individual program areas and pool them together in the IT budget in order to help control and manage these very limited resources (CFR 3.5).

Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes

Although the institution's leadership seems to be characterized by "integrity, high performance, and appropriate responsibility as outlined in CFR 3.6, the team confirmed that the Board of Trustees has yet to exercise its authority to hold the president accountable through any formal review of his performance (CFR 3.9). The board is aware of this and plans to review the president at the end of this academic year; however, an ongoing plan for regular review of the president and key leadership will be necessary to assure continuity of the university's mission and vision.

HNU's four-member Audit Committee, which meets four times a year to review the annual financial statement audit and other financial indicators, is considered a sub-committee of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee, which meets four times a year under the chairmanship of an outside Board of Trustees member, is active and appears to have substantial ownership of the institution's finances and financial operations. Three of the four Audit Committee members and five of the six Finance Committee members are independent (CFR 3.9). Members of the Board of Trustees believe they are on their way to

meeting the joint Finance Committee and Board goal of more timely and transparent financial reporting in response to being caught off-guard by the large downturn in enrollment which resulted in significant erosion of the unrestricted net assets (CFR 3.9). The Board of Trustees composition appears to be sufficient in number (21 independent members), and all appear to have relevant experience from diverse backgrounds and strong qualifications to exercise appropriate and consistent oversight (CFR 3.9). Members felt that the information they currently receive is accurate and sufficient for making informed decisions; however, they concurred that more transparent and detailed information from the Finance Committee would give them a more robust understanding of HNU's operations and allow them to participate in more proactive, clear, and consistent decision-making (CFR 3.9).

The institution's organizational structure appears to be clearly defined and well thought out. It appears that there are sufficient and purposeful procedures for review and key decision-making, and a willingness to tackle issues related to sustainability. The team also noted that, although the IPC performs a review of the final draft budget, there seems to be no follow up to measure actual results throughout the year. The team suggests that an appropriate group also periodically review the financial standing of the institution to ensure transparency and continued communication among key stakeholders (CFR 3.7).

The team concluded that all levels of the institution's leadership appear to be characterized by integrity, high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability (CFR 3.6). The institution has a highly qualified president, who seems to be engaged with the institution's overall management (CFR 3.8) Evaluation of the president is specifically called for in the bylaws; however, no such review seems to have taken place during the current president's tenure. The review planned for this year should be performed to meet the institution's own bylaws and to demonstrate accountability at the highest level of the organization (CFR 3.9).

The institution hired a full-time Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA) as of July 1, 2015 (CFR 3.8). The newly appointed VPFA has six years of prior chief financial officer experience as well as prior strategic planning and restructuring experience. He has already fostered the greater financial transparency among key stakeholders that will enable the institution to make the hard decisions necessary to assure the institution's sustainability. HNU has three additional vice presidents to oversee academic affairs, advancement, and mission effectiveness. Greater leadership and strong strategic acumen is being sought for a Vice President (VP) of Enrollment Management separate from the VP of Student Affairs. These seven administrators all show strong relevant backgrounds in their respective disciplines and would seem more than sufficient to provide effective educational leadership and management for HNU. Relative salaries may be a consideration for recruitment and retention at this level as it may be for faculty and staff (CFRs 3.6 and 3.8).

The faculty, as members of councils and committees, is fully engaged in advancing the institution's purposes and character. The primary academic committee, the Academic Affairs Committee, is comprised of both the chair and vice chair of the Faculty Senate. This committee oversees the academic program and is the gateway for all academic initiatives. The HNU Faculty Senate is responsible for approval of academic matters and oversees the curriculum (CFR 3.10).

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

The team's finding, which is subject to Commission review, is that the institution has demonstrated sufficient evidence of compliance with Standard 4.

Quality Assurance Processes and Institutional Learning and Improvement

HNU's recently revised program review processes; annual assessment of student learning in academic programs; limited assessment of co-curricular programs such as athletics, the library, and the Advising and Learning Resources Center (ALCR); establishment of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), which provides faculty with support and resources for teaching (CFR 4.4); the addition of a capable Associate Dean (AD) of Institutional Effectiveness; and investment in Taskstream software demonstrate the institution's emerging commitment to and understanding of the need for quality assurance. Although the processes are in place and HNU expresses a commitment to provide personnel and resources to create the capacity to compile and use data, actual assessment of student learning is in a nascent stage (CFR 4.1). Initial evidence of meaningful assessment exists in a few academic programs, but others have yet to engage the process and low response and participation rates limit the voice of some groups and the ability to measure outcomes in others (CFR 4.5). Data collected to date has yet to be disseminated or incorporated into planning in any significant way (CFR 4.2). The institution is seeking a new Institutional Research (IR) Director and is taking the opportunity to restructure the IR office to more effectively lead the meaningful use of data for decision-making based on a culture of assessment and evidence (CFR 4.3). It is essential that the institution continue to make demonstrable efforts to move forward with data collection, reporting, and analysis for decision-making, planning, and improvement.

HNU will need a robust planning process that allows the institution to anticipate and respond to future challenges and opportunities (CFR 4.6). The current 2013-18 strategic plan was created using a process that was described as inclusive, that utilized small groups and dialogue, and that provided a review of mission and vision to produce goals that reflect institutional voice. However, the plan did not anticipate current enrollment challenges nor did the plan seem to identify timelines or necessary resources for implementing the plan's

various actions (CFR 4.7). According to the IPC, progress on the strategic plan is reviewed at every meeting and updated using Taskstream, but a review of the plan in Taskstream did not provide the team with evidence that the plan is being implemented or monitored. The Board of Trustees acknowledges its need to be more involved in strategic planning, describing the current plan as inactive. The Board recognizes this as a propitious moment to revisit the strategic plan, to ask difficult questions, to develop financial goals, and to anticipate and respond to changes occurring in the Oakland community.

Overall, HNU completed the Review under the Standards in a reflective and analytical way. They thoughtfully and transparently identified strengths and weaknesses in current processes and procedures. A remedy is being proposed to correct the failure to evaluate the university's president (CFRs 3.9 and 3.10). The institution has in place some of the infrastructure to improve areas such as enrollment and financial planning, assessment, and institutional research; however, success in some of these areas will depend on the institutions ability to recruit and retain qualified personnel and to motivate and hold accountable current personnel to ensure that efforts are consistent across all academic and co-curricular units.

Federal requirements for credit hour, marketing and recruitment, student complaints, and transfer policies have been met. The requisite documentation is attached to this report in Appendix A1, A2, A3, A4, and B respectively.

The HNU graduate and undergraduate curriculum and standards committees along with the program review committee ensure that credit hour assignments are reasonable and consistently applied across all degree programs. These committees meet regularly to discuss policies related to standards of rigor, the unit value of courses, revisions to programs of study, and the approval of new courses and programs. These discussions will be particularly important as HNU continues to explore technological innovations in online and hybrid course delivery and as the institution expands the number of courses that have an embedded community-based learning component. Although these oversight committees function effectively, each indicated a desire for more robust data that can be easily obtained, understood, and applied to decision-making processes.

Holy Names University has completed its Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (IEEI) and has provided evidence that every degree program has defined levels of student achievement (CFR 2.2). Recently developed processes will eventually allow the faculty to assess, track, and improve student learning (CFR 2.4). The IEEI and conversations with university faculty and administrators reflect varying degrees of consistency and engagement in the implementation of assessment plans across programs.

Final determination of compliance with the Standards rests with the Commission.

Component 3: Degree Programs: Meaning, quality and integrity of the degrees

A Holy Names University degree is deeply rooted in the institution's commitment to the values of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (CFR 1.1). HNU endeavors to educate a diverse body of students in the liberal arts tradition while inculcating values of liberating action, courage, and integrity. Thus, the university designs academic programs connected to a range of co-curricular and community-based learning opportunities, an approach that balances the consistent development of intellectual and professional skills with an appropriately individualized educational experience. Graduates are equipped to recognize and respond to social injustice, and to provide creative, humane solutions to pressing societal needs.

The meaning of an undergraduate and graduate degree is reflected in the university's mission and historical values, and is aligned across institutional learning outcomes, general education (GE) learning outcomes, and program learning outcomes (PLOs). HNU's four institutional learning outcomes were first established in 2013 and approved in February 2015. The institution's five general education learning outcomes capture three of the five WSCUC core competencies (quantitative reasoning and oral communication are not represented) and institutional goals such as integrative learning and civic engagement (CFRs 2.3, 2.4). Program-level student learning outcomes exist for nearly all degree programs, and many include curriculum maps.

The quality of an HNU degree is defined through assessment of student learning outcomes as coordinated through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and in collaboration with academic and student affairs personnel. Despite evidence of a strong two-year process to establish the institutional learning outcomes, no assessment data have been provided for these ILOs (CFR 2.4); indeed, very few members of the HNU community were aware of any assessment plans for these outcomes. Participation in this process is uneven, and there seems to be little accountability for those who elect not to participate or acknowledgement for those who do. If HNU is to develop a culture of assessment robust enough to assure the quality of their degrees, such participation will need to be an expectation across the institution.

Elements of HNU's dynamic undergraduate education model such as the general education curriculum, the Integrative Studies across Cultures (ISAC) program, first-year programming, community-based learning communities, and co-curricular experiences allow the fluid integration of real world and classroom experiences, both of which inform students' disciplinary majors. HNU deliberately engages stakeholders across the campus to create enduring connections among students and support services to help all students thrive. HNU formally reviews ISAC at an annual retreat. Additionally, efforts are being made to connect community-based learning activities with clearly defined assignments that are linked to course outcomes. Direct assessment of each of the general education learning outcomes

includes the evaluation of signature assignments in required GE courses such as English 1A/1B and ISAC 195W. HNU also uses several indirect assessment measures to gauge students' personal growth and satisfaction with their college experience, but these self-report surveys are costly and have extremely low response rates.

Program student learning outcomes are established for nearly every degree program. Many programs have completed more than one cycle of assessment, and the results are publically accessible from the institution's website via Taskstream. A clear organizational structure allows easy navigation among the academic programs' assessment plans and results. In most programs, a capstone project acts as the primary opportunity for faculty to collect direct evidence of student learning.

The integrity of an HNU degree can be discerned in the catalog and website descriptions of each degree that clearly identify the academic requirements and, in most cases, the standards of performance required for degree completion. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, a Curriculum and Standards Committee helps ensure the integrity of an HNU degree by reviewing new programs and making recommendations for modifications related to the full scope of the degree program. A Program Review Committee and regularly scheduled external program reviews allow ongoing evaluation of degree programs. There is an emerging emphasis on using the assessment of student learning to inform institutional priorities. As HNU refines its program review process, it will be important to consider how direct assessment of student learning informs decisions about the financial viability of the program, the breadth of curriculum, and staffing.

Although assessment plans are available for nearly all degree programs, HNU may need to clarify its standards for achievement in some programs beyond the frequently cited target of "70% of students will obtain a C or better." It is not clear that the grades assigned in courses are determined using standard measures across sections. The use of rubrics to measure achievement on signature assignments could prove useful. The quality and meaning of assessment across programs is uneven. In some cases, (i.e., business), the specific evaluation process for the assessment measures is detailed, with clear evidence that the data are being used to inform improvement. In other cases, (i.e., philosophy), there is far less information available: "papers submitted but not assessed."

The assessment of learning in the graduate programs is less consistent than at the undergraduate level. For example, the Counseling Psychology program has very little in the way of specific student learning outcomes or explanation as to how competency is assessed. Similarly, the Master of Arts (MA) in Culture and Spirituality has no clear direct assessment plan. More can be done to ensure that the indicators of institutionally defined quality and integrity are clear, even in programs like nursing for which accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) is required.

Component 4: Educational Quality: Student learning, core competencies, and standards of performance at graduation

WSCUC standards require that undergraduate programs “ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking.” Over a two year period, 2013-2015, HNU faculty developed five general education student learning outcomes, and in February 2015, began mapping the GE outcomes to the institutional learning outcomes and curriculum with the intent to measure three of its GE SLOs in fall 2015: information literacy (assessed in ISAC 195W capstone paper), critical thinking (assessed in English 1B argument paper and by ISAC 195W capstone paper), and written communication (assessed in signature assignments in identified GE courses.)

Information Literacy (IL) and instruction have been augmented through partnerships with HNU librarians, but assessment of student learning has been limited. Since fall 2010, HNU has issued SAILS (Standardized Assessment in Information Literacy Skills) to incoming students to benchmark their competencies in IL. In spring 2014, librarians piloted a performance-based assessment of IL for graduating students and assessed 16 capstone papers. Assessment results “reveal trends in a student’s information literacy skill level at both entry and completion at HNU” (HNU Institutional Report, p. 21). It is not clear whether an understanding of the trends resulted in any adjustments to the institution’s approach to IL instruction.

Critical Thinking is assessed in upper division departmental capstone classes and through signature assignments throughout the ISAC curriculum (HNU Institutional Report, p. 21). Beginning in fall 2014, capstone assignments were uploaded to Taskstream, but at the time of the institutional report, not all of the papers had been evaluated. Following the assessment of a signature assignment in Philosophy 40W/140W, the only improvement measure determined was a need for the philosophy faculty “to have a workshop on developing and calibrating rubrics...” (HNU Institutional Report, p. 22). HNU refers to the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) senior survey as an indirect measure of the critical thinking competencies. HNU notes that 100% of the respondents on the 2014 graduating senior survey believed HNU contributed “quite a bit” and “very much” to critical thinking; however, only 12 students responded to the survey.

Written Communication is embedded in the Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) program, which uses the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) value rubrics to assess writing competency. As with critical thinking, not all of the papers have been assessed, and few pieces of actionable data have been collected.

The team acknowledges HNU’s efforts to thoughtfully refine student learning outcomes at the institutional level, within the general education curriculum, and at the degree program level. The team found this process to be a mission-driven effort that

included a range of stakeholders and that has resulted in assessment plans and curricular maps in most programs; however, the team agrees with HNU's acknowledgement that the execution of these assessment plans has happened with varying degrees of consistency and quality across programs. The team also notes that more can be done to evaluate the effectiveness of signature programs such as community-based learning initiatives, the Integrative Studies across Cultures curriculum, and specialized intervention efforts for at-risk students. Some of these evaluation efforts are underway, and the team urges continued focus to align curricular and co-curricular learning as valued in the HNU mission.

For this accreditation cycle, HNU chose to assess just three of its learning outcomes; however, the team suggests that HNU consider the development of a general education learning outcome related to the required WSCUC core competencies related to quantitative reasoning and oral communication. As the institution develops such outcomes, it should consider plans to assess other institutional learning outcomes such as civic engagement/social justice and integrative knowledge.

Component 5: Student Success: Student learning, retention, and graduation

The faculty and staff of HNU are highly invested in student success. The Success and Retention Committee (SRC), consisting of representatives from student affairs and academic affairs, works to identify obstacles to retention and provide support for students to address those obstacles. During interviews, the SRC defined student success holistically in terms of retention, graduation, student engagement, and the learning that occurs both within and outside of the classroom. The primary barrier the committee has identified to student success is financial, since many students balance their academic performance with the need to support themselves and care for family.

HNU's efforts to improve student retention and graduation have produced some positive results. The fall to fall retention rate for first time freshmen has averaged 70.6% over the last ten years, and the first year fall to fall retention rate for all traditional undergraduates has averaged 72%. First time, full time (FTFT) retention for the current (fall2014) cohort fell to 60% and all traditional undergraduates to 66.9%. HNU's six year graduation rate hovered between 30% and 39% for the 2004 to 2007 cohorts, rose briefly to 49.5% for the 2008 cohort, but fell back to 40% for the 2009 cohort (35% for Hispanic students). The institution has not yet begun to analyze the data using anything like the WSCUC graduation rate dashboard. The SRC's initial analysis of the dip in retention for the fall 2014 cohort focuses on changing demographics in the student body with increasing numbers of first generation students and students from families with low to moderate incomes. Non-retained students in recent cohorts have a larger gap between the cost of education and expected family contribution. By reviewing retention data (CFR 2.10), the SRC has identified that students with an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) gap of over

\$4000 are at risk for not returning. There are no discernable trends in the retention rates of students from disaggregated racial/ethnic identities; however, year-one to year-two retention rates for males over the last three years averaged 58.6% as compared to 73.4% for females. The SRC is aware of this gap and attributes it to the small number of non-athlete male students. Athletics seems to have a significant impact on a student's sense of belonging. The SRC has not yet done a thorough analysis to identify specific at risk groups, largely because there seems to be a lack of data on retention and graduation disaggregated by various sub-populations other than ethnicity and gender (CFR 4.1). A review of retention and graduation rates at the program level is embedded in the program review process (CFR 2.7).

HNU has implemented numerous initiatives in the last few years to address student success (CFR 2.13). These include early warning reports in all classes to quickly identify struggling students and provide interventions, and outreach to students who do not register for the following term. HNU has established various high impact teaching and learning practices. One of the most significant is the Connections Project First Year Experience (CP FYE) program. This program, supported by the ISAC office, forms connections between incoming students and the institution beginning with student registration by matching incoming students with peer mentors and a learning community through Integrative Studies Across Cultures (ISAC) curriculum. ISAC faculty reach out to students and begin group reading before the start of their first term. Faculty typically spend 15 hours with students prior to the start of the term. Through these connections, faculty and peer mentors are able to refer students to appropriate service areas when needs are identified.

HNU instituted a professional advising model in 2012 with the establishment of the Advising and Learning Resources Center (ALRC) to improve student advising and address concerns over faculty workload. The ALRC provides academic support to undergraduate students and reports that almost all undergraduate students use its services, which include academic advising, peer tutoring, facilitated group study, a writing studio, a math lab, science tutoring, and disability support services (CFR 2.12). Despite its short history, the ALRC has begun to assess its impact through semester surveys and a usage log, has confirmed general student satisfaction with the new model, and has made changes based on data that identified a lack of student awareness of remaining requirements to graduation (CFR 2.11). To support students on academic probation, HNU developed the Strategies for Academic Success (CALP 95) course in 2013 to help students identify problem behaviors and develop strategies for academic success as they receive academic coaching and meet regularly with an academic advisor. The faculty plan to assess the program by tracking the grade point average (GPA) of participants each term after taking the course and plan to track its impact on retention, but data were still emerging at the time of the AV.

HNU is exerting great effort to care for and retain its students. However, the SRC acknowledges that regular evaluation of these various programs still needs to be done. Current assessment consists largely of anecdotal data. The 2009 Interim Report Committee letter recommended the creation of a strategic retention plan, but the institution has yet to produce such a plan integrating these various efforts. The institution would benefit from the creation of a comprehensive written retention plan that defines student success in the context of HNU, establishes processes for consistent collection and analysis of data related to student success, integrates the various institutional efforts, and develops means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of its various strategies (CFR 2.10).

Component 6: Quality Assurance and Improvement: Program review, assessment, use of data and evidence

HNU is creating structures for quality assurance and improvement including a recently revised process for program review and annual assessment of student learning in all programs (CFR 4.1). The institution is beginning to implement these processes to varying degrees of success in its efforts to create a culture of assessment. The institution is also in the midst of restructuring its institutional research function to create more effective processes for data collection needed to provide evidence of student learning and inform decision-making and planning.

Program Review

HNU has worked to create an incremental, sustainable program review process that will support a culture of assessment throughout the institution. HNU updated its attempts to create a program review process in 2014 that focused on assessment and improvement of student learning (CFR 2.7). The Program Review Committee (PRC) oversees the process, evaluates each program review based on a rubric, and makes recommendations for future planning. The PRC is a committee of the faculty senate consisting of faculty members appointed to two-year terms and the Associate Dean for Institutional Effectiveness working in coordination with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

Each academic program is scheduled to conduct a program review every five years; approximately seven programs undergo review annually. The PRC considers this to be a sustainable pace. The process includes a self-study of the degree program, review of the last five annual assessment reports, review by the PRC, and an external peer review. The external academic expert reads the self-study; meets with faculty, students, staff, administration, and possibly alumni; and submits a report providing an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the program. The review results in recommendations, goals for the next five years, and actions necessary for improvement.

HNU has maintained this schedule for academic program review for the last two years. The PRC reports that faculty members are beginning to embrace the new process and appreciate the increased standardization, although many programs are still developing an understanding of assessment. Recent program reviews follow the provided template addressing mission, curriculum (including learning outcomes), faculty, and resources. However, there is minimal attention to student achievement of program learning outcomes despite the current attempt to be outcomes focused. Sections of reviews addressing learning outcomes tend to describe process rather than provide evidence of achievement. The rubric used to assess the quality of the review and provide feedback to the faculty, although a very helpful instrument, does not include a criterion for findings from assessment of student achievement of SLOs. Recommended actions stemming from program reviews tend to focus on the need for more faculty or the revision of rubrics and outcomes. Few address pedagogical or curricular changes necessary to better support student learning (CFR 4.4). Timelines beyond a follow-up by the PRC in a year are often absent from action plans. The PRC noted the need for additional data streams such as program retention, expenses and income, and feedback from recent graduates. There is currently no evidence that program reviews tie to the institutional budget or planning processes (CFR 4.6).

Assessment of Student Learning

In order to address this lag in assessing student outcomes, HNU spent 2013-14 developing or updating learning outcomes and curriculum maps (CFR 2.6). Most programs now have measurable, albeit somewhat inconsistently clear and rigorous, learning outcome statements (CFR 2.4). According to the institutional report, 71% of undergraduate programs and 67% of graduate programs submitted their annual assessment reports in 2014. In 2015, 71% of undergraduate programs and 86% of graduate programs submitted reports. The AD of Institutional Effectiveness provides additional training, meets with program faculty, and presents at faculty sessions, all with the goal of streamlining the process and addressing the challenges a smaller institution with limited faculty in some departments has in achieving full compliance within a well-established culture of assessment.

Faculty plan to continue to discuss the amount of student work that should be reviewed, establishment of appropriate benchmarks, effective use of rubrics, use of multiple evaluators to support conclusions on student achievement, and the use of both direct and indirect evidence of student learning.

HNU's assessment practices have not consistently included substantial summaries of findings, and there is little evidence that assessment results are considered reflectively in the development of plans to increase student achievement and improve overall learning (CFR 2.6). One exception is the assessment of the information literacy core competency

over the last two years. HNU's library uses Project SAILS to assess the information literacy level of incoming students and has adjusted its workshops in response to findings. As students approach graduation, papers are randomly selected from the senior capstone course, ISAC 195W, and evaluated by two research librarians through the use of a rubric. The assessment report provides a good summary of findings over the course of students' careers and informs plans for improving student learning. This assessment provides a good model for faculty as they continue to develop the capacity to assess student learning.

HNU is in the preliminary stages of assessing co-curricular programs with plans to use a process similar to that developed for academic programs (CFR 2.11). A few co-curricular programs, such as athletics, the library, and the ALRC, are in the early stages of assessing their effectiveness and provide a model for other departments.

Data Collection and Analysis

Despite a commitment to provide personnel and resources to create the capacity to compile and use data (CFR 4.2), HNU acknowledges its need for continued improvement in the areas of data collection; reporting; and analysis for decision-making, planning, and improvement (CFR 4.3). For example, evidence is lacking that the institution has gathered and thoroughly reviewed data to determine the reasons for and possible solutions to its current enrollment challenges. The institution's primary data piece, the HNU Fact Book, is well-constructed and presents a wealth of helpful data; however, data collection seems to be hampered by very low response rates from students, faculty, and alumni to institutional surveys. The institution is exploring ways to improve response rates, noting that it is an important step in creating a culture of assessment among all constituents (CFR 4.5).

The position of Institutional Research Director has been developed to replace the recently departed Institutional Research Officer and increase HNU's capacity to make evidence-based decisions. The proposed IR Director will be a Ph.D. trained individual who is tasked with restructuring the IR function and coordinating across each vice president's area in order to bring all institutional data together with established research priorities. As the budget allows, the institution intends to also hire an analyst and a data manager within the office. In the meantime, the chief financial officer (CFO) is providing relevant financial data to faculty, administration, and the board. The team encourages the administration to implement this plan to hire a person well-equipped to identify research questions important to the institution; to clearly communicate data to faculty, administration, board, and various committees; and to assist administration in creating a strategy by which all departments and institutional functions may be held accountable for providing the information necessary to drive data-driven planning and decision-making (CFR 4.1).

HNU has invested in Taskstream software to coordinate its assessment and program review efforts. According to the PRC, one benefit of Taskstream is that it allows for

accountability among faculty by creating a public site where academic program efforts to assess student learning are housed and available for fellow faculty to review. The team learned that some faculty find conducting the process through Taskstream burdensome, and leadership hopes to simplify the method for uploading student work into the system over the next year. Interviews during the AV also seemed to indicate that the university's current student information system is not robust and that a nimble and dynamic system would help streamline data gathering and reporting (CFR 4.2).

These efforts provide a solid starting point, but HNU lacks and will need to develop a comprehensive institutional assessment plan that identifies effective assessment instruments, leads to significant discussions on achievement of institutional and program learning outcomes and departmental goals, and clearly ties data-informed discussions to decision-making and planning (CFR 4.6).

Component 7: Sustainability: Financial viability, preparing for the changing higher education environment

As it is currently operating, Holy Names University struggles to bring its operations into financial alignment. To achieve the financial stability forecasted by HNU to begin at the end of the fiscal year 2018, the institution will need to enjoy several years of strong unrestricted net asset increases. HNU understands that financial sustainability requires operating with increased unrestricted net assets each year. Although previous years have shown modest growth in this area, the most recent year and the current year's large projected deficit will require HNU to continue to modify its five-year budget model in order to allocate their limited resources appropriately towards the most necessary of expenditures first, while identifying ways to trim back on less essential areas. To achieve financial stability and bring the currently negative CFI score into the positive, the IPC, president's cabinet, the Board of Trustees and other stakeholder groups will need to be informed and work together. The current projected shortfall, as forecasted, is planned to be offset in the coming year by large tuition increases and additional scholarships, funded largely by a new estate gift. While the large estate gift will temporarily assist HNU from a cash standpoint and additional scholarship offsets, the gift is restricted and largely unavailable for use in operations. The "Ever Forward" capital campaign provides for additional buildings on the campus, but it does not provide for the additional costs in operations to sustain these new capital improvements. These new estimated costs will need to be determined and incorporated into the 5-year budget model in order to correctly assess ongoing operations needs. The institution's plans to continue exploring the viability of distance learning as feasible was to expand HNU's student reach, to increase enrollment and to diversify the current revenue streams are to be encouraged. The current tuition dependent model should be continually challenged by the stakeholders at HNU in order to develop new strategies,

niches, and increase market awareness beyond their current student reach. HNU appears to be struggling well, given the extremely difficult circumstances currently facing them.

Much has been written about the institution's limited ability to gather, analyze, and use data to drive key decisions and ensure quality improvement. That a significant drop in enrollment seems to have caught an enrollment-driven institution so off-guard is a concern; however, it also seems to have been the catalyst for significant steps to heighten awareness, communication, and institutional research. A potentially effective process of program assessment has been implemented, but the process is as yet not firmly embedded as a culture and it is somewhat unclear how much priority will be given to continuous work in this area, particularly given that this has been a recurring theme in past visits. HNU must continue to address seriously issues of program review and the development of a robust, sustainable culture of assessment to inform and drive institutional planning and progress if it is to continue with the excellence and security it desires.

Such a robust institutional culture of inquiry and assessment will also be needed if HNU is to identify and prepare to engage the various global, national, regional, and local factors and events that are likely to most affect the institution, not the least of which is the financial health of the institution. If HNU is to maintain sustainability, the institution must take continued steps to achieve financial stability and carefully monitor economic trends and indicators to sustain that stability.

Component 8: Optional essay on institutional specific themes

The institution did not elect to include an optional essay.

Component 9: Reflection and plans for improvement

The HNU self-study appears to have been an effective institutional exercise in identifying strengths and challenges facing the institution, and has good potential to serve as a catalyst for developing more effective processes and plans for improvement. As a result of the self-study, HNU became acutely aware of enrollment and retention issues that pose a serious threat to them as a tuition dependent institution. HNU further acknowledged that it has some distance to go before it can confidently assert that it has successfully established a culture of assessment of student learning across the university. Among its strengths, HNU appropriately acknowledged the diversity of the campus community, the faculty's and staff's commitment to student learning, and campus energy innovations that are environmentally sustainable and economically efficient. However, HNU's celebrated status as one of the 24 most affordable private universities in the United States does not minimize the challenge it faces in insuring sufficient net revenue to support its annual operating budget, nor should its ability to attract a diverse student body substitute for ongoing assessment of its ability to serve the needs of those students effectively. (CFRs 1.4, 3.3, 3.4)

SECTION III – OTHER TOPICS

No substantive change proposals or other issues were identified or addressed during the Accreditation Visit.

SECTION IV – FINDINGS, COMMENDATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The AV team found Holy Names University to have engaged seriously and broadly a number of important issues central to their continued success. The institution's self reflection was honest and, in many cases, useful to the process of on-going quality improvement. The team found that the institution had not foreseen the downward trend in enrollment that contributed to the current financial problems facing them, and steps are being taken to address the fiscal impact of these events. The institution seemed to have a sense that the inability to gather, analyze and report substantive data in a sophisticated way must be addressed if further such challenges are to be avoided or are to be confronted more effectively in a timely manner. The team appreciated the transparency with which the institution reported the issues in the institutional report and with which they answered questions and offered information during the visit. The team encourages ongoing dialogue to assure that all voices are heard equally, that multiple perspectives are considered when facing challenges, and that a more proactive rather than reactive posture become the institutional norm. Overall, the team is encouraged that this reaffirmation process has served to demonstrate the many things Holy Names University is doing well and to point the institution towards continued and improved best practices to ensure continued success and sustainability.

Commendations

The team commends Holy Names University for the following accomplishments and practices.

1. The guidance and support of the Holy Names sisters for the university's efforts to maintain and advance HNU's faith-based tradition, particularly with regard to social justice and outreach to the local community. The team further commends HNU's commitment to providing equitable access to quality education for a richly diverse student body.
2. Intentional efforts to link the institutional student learning outcomes across academic and co-curricular experiences (CFR 2.5, 2.8) and the establishment of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) as an important resource to help to align efforts in curriculum development, instructional design, and assessment of student learning (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.6).

3. The development and revision of processes used for annual assessments of student learning outcomes, the revised program review process, and the establishment of services and programs to support student success,
4. The introduction of solar energy and other initiatives that are environmentally responsible and cost effective.
5. Strong commitment of faculty and staff to the values and mission of the university and their support of students in and out of the classroom.
6. Transparency of institutional financial standing and the institution's efforts to promote frequent, transparent, and ongoing communication from the administration to the HNU community.

Recommendations

The team recommends that Holy Names University take the following steps.

1. Establish appropriate structures and processes to ensure the effective generation, reporting, and analysis of meaningful data to inform decision-making and lead to planning that is nimble, and effective in anticipating and responding to rapid changes in the external environment (CFR 4.1, 2, 3).
2. Develop and consistently utilize clear, sustainable methods of assessing student achievement related to the core competencies, general education, and program level learning outcomes.
3. Continue to coordinate efforts across HNU's academic departments and student service divisions to improve the educational effectiveness of the university's academic and co-curricular programs and to assess the impact of student success strategies designed to maximize learning (CFR 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.11).
4. Create a comprehensive written retention plan that defines student success and articulates the means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of its various strategies (CFR 2.10).
5. Maintain a clear focus and strong commitment to developing a stable financial base, including clear, strategic enrollment goals that will sustain HNU well into the future.
6. Ensure that trustees regularly evaluate the university president (CFR 3.9) and oversee a process for succession planning for key university leaders that assures continuity of important functions and operations in keeping with the university's mission and vision.

APPENDIX A
FEDERAL COMPLIANCE FORMS

1 - CREDIT HOUR AND PROGRAM LENGTH REVIEW FORM

Under federal regulations, WSCUC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution's credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Credit Hour - §602.24(f)

The accrediting agency, as part of its review of an institution for renewal of accreditation, must conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution's assignment of credit hours.

- (1) The accrediting agency meets this requirement if-
 - (i) It reviews the institution's-
 - (A) Policies and procedures for determining the credit hours, as defined in 34 CFR 600.2, that the institution awards for courses and programs; and
 - (B) The application of the institution's policies and procedures to its programs and coursework; and
 - (ii) Makes a reasonable determination of whether the institution's assignment of credit hours conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education.

- (2) In reviewing and evaluating an institution's policies and procedures for determining credit hour assignments, an accrediting agency may use sampling or other methods in the evaluation.

Credit hour is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission's Credit Hour Policy.

Program Length - §602.16(a)(1)(viii)

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor's degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master's degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

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? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Where is the policy located? In the course catalog and website.
	Comments: https://www.hnu.edu/sites/default/files/hnu-2015-16_catalog_pages.pdf
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)? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: The graduate and undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committees as well as the Program Review Committee help ensure that credit hour assignments are reasonable and consistently applied across programs. There is currently no systematic audit process in place to check that instructional faculty are adhering to the standards put forth in their course descriptions and syllabi; however, informal checks are achieved through course evaluations and opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience and overall learning in the course and program.
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: http://courses.hnu.edu/courseclassschedules/courseclassschedulespublic?v1=1
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? three
	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both
	What degree level(s)? Bachelor's and master's degree level courses were reviewed.
	What discipline(s)? Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Nursing
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	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? three
	What kinds of courses? Forensics integrating seminar, connections project lab, criminal justice course
	What degree level(s)? Bachelor's and master's degree level courses were reviewed.
	What discipline(s)? Counseling Psychology, First Year Experience program, Criminal Justice
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: As part of the first-year experience at HNU, students are required to complete a 1-unit connections project lab that requires out of class participation in a range of activities including peer mentor meetings and online learning modules. These activities are tracked and assessed to ensure completion. In capstone courses such as the integrating seminar for Forensics students, four, 90-minute class meetings are supplemented by ongoing milestone assignments to track progress in the thesis paper. Courses that include a community based learning component include online portfolios or class presentations that detail those activities and require students to link the CBL to the objectives of the course and program learning outcomes.
Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)	How many programs were reviewed? five
	What kinds of programs were reviewed? Undergraduate and graduate programs (where applicable) in business, psychology, religious studies, and sociology
	What degree level(s)? Bachelor's and master's degree level courses were reviewed.
	What discipline(s)? Business Administration, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology
	Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Each of the degree programs reviewed was of sufficient length and requires courses that provide: breadth of knowledge, exposure to key theoretical and historic frameworks in the field, academic and professional skill acquisition through coursework and experiential learning components, and a curricular orientation to HNU's mission to promote social justice, ethics, and a commitment to the common good.

Review Completed By: Dianna M. Graves

Date: March 23, 2016

2. 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? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments: • HNU does not offer/accept/receive compensation of any kind for recruiting students. • HNU compensates enrollment counselors as exempt employees who receive a fixed salary (subject to change as regulations change). • HNU enrollment counselors do not receive commissions for their work. • HNU accurately represents its programs and services through electronic and traditional documents. Up-to-date program information, including degree requirements, is provided in catalogues, handbooks, the University website, and through regularly updated brochures and bulletins. • Consumer information is displayed on the HNU website. • HNU provides information through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), annual audits, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) reports, and various program reviews (e.g., nursing and education).
Degree completion and cost	<p>Does the institution provide information about the typical length of time to degree? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Does the institution provide information about the overall cost of the degree? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HNU publishes and provides information about all costs associated with enrollment (e.g., tuition, housing, fees, fines, etc.) and annually conducts Council on Assessment (COA) assessments. Student Financial Counselors (Financial Aid and Student Accounts) review costs with students through calculation worksheets, financial aid awards, net tuition calculator, and counseling. Financial policies and information are published on the university's website.
Careers and employment	<p>Does the institution provide information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Does the institution provide information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
	<p>Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HNU provides information about employment of its graduates as well as opportunities. Information is available on the university's website and is associated with the various programs. • HNU collects data annually on graduates to identify employment, and information is used in marketing, recruiting, advising, and career counseling. • HNU provides specific employment opportunities, and HNU highlights alumni, both associated with academic programs the University offers.

*§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: Doug Renner

3. 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? Where? The policy is accessible on the institution’s website https://www.hnu.edu/student-life/student-handbook/resolution-complaints and in the student handbook.
	Comments: Policy is appropriate and provides protection for students.
Process(es)/ procedure	Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, please describe briefly: HNU has a three step process that begins with discussing the complaint with the appropriate dean or director, and if still unresolved filing a written complaint with the Office of the Vice President for Mission Effectiveness who attempts to resolve the issue with all parties. If the complaint is still not resolved to the complainant’s satisfaction, he/she can request a Complaint Review Panel be formed to hear the matter. The Panel’s findings and recommendations are forwarded to the President for a final decision.
	If so, does the institution adhere to this procedure? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: Evidence from student files was provided that the institution follows its procedure.
Records	Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	If so, where? A hardcopy of formal complaints is kept in a file cabinet in the Vice President of Mission Effectiveness’ office.
	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: The Vice President of Student Affairs tracks the history of complaints through a log.
	Comments:

*§602-16(1)(1)(ix)

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

4. 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? x YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Is the policy publically available? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If so, where? University Catalog p. 16-17. University web page https://www.hnu.edu/admissions/undergraduate/transfer-students/transfer-requirements
	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? X YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
	Comments: HNU appears to comply with WSCUC policies related to transfer credit.

*§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.

APPENDIX B

Distance Education

HNU does have a limited number of distance education classes, two of which are fully online in the business department. Other courses are considered blended and are spread across the disciplines of business, education, criminology, psychology, and international relations.

In order to meet the federal policy requirements related to distance learning, HNU provides a secure login and passcode to each student enrolled in distance learning courses.

In order to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program, HNU uses proctored examinations. Due to the low number of students enrolled in these programs, identification of students is also verifiable by the various instructors.