

## **Preliminary Self-Review under the Standards of Accreditation**

To conduct the self-review, the university employed survey research methodology, building a series of four online surveys using the tool "Survey Monkey". The attachment entitled "Self Review Surveys I-IV" contains the four surveys, which comprise all of the questions provided in the "Worksheet for Preliminary Self-Review Under the Standards". In the fall of 2007, the office of Educational and Institutional Research distributed these four instruments to the following 82 constituents: 1) Faculty members who have led or are leading program reviews dating back to 2002, 2) all deans and associate deans, and 3) the university's senior leadership (president, provost, chief financial officer, ...). Overall, 80% of these constituents responded to the entire survey.

The complete survey results may be viewed in the attachment "Self Review Results I-IV" located at the end of this section. Based on the majority (mode) response, none of the CFR's was denoted "needs significant development". The majority of respondents identified most of the CFR's as "areas of strength". The remaining 37% of the CFR's were made by a majority of the respondents: "aspects of this need our attention". These topics needing attention center on assessment (programs, skills, satisfaction); institutional planning; information gathering, processing, and dissemination; technology; leadership (faculty, administrative); and diversity. The findings of the self-review helped to frame the direction of this review cycle with its intentional focus on assessment and meaning in the curriculum and programming. Based on the collection of data for the self review and the and discussion that ensued several key research questions have been formulated to guide both the CPR and EER reviews. These are discussed in section B.3.ii.

Follow-up activities and responsible individuals and groups related to the CFR's needing attention, as reflected in our self-review audit, are highlighted in red in the appendix entitled "CFR Action List". Following is a detailed account of the issues that emerged as needing attention and our proposed action plans to attend to these issues:

### **1.2 Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution and are consistent with stated purposes. The institution has developed indicators and evidence to ascertain the level of achievement of its purposes and educational objectives.**

Action: The stated purpose of the university as articulated in the mission statement is widely disseminated to the community and to the public, as evidenced by its prominent display on the university's website. Educational objectives are articulated at the program level through the program review mechanism and are disseminated in the program review documents. To achieve greater dissemination, these objectives could be published more consistently in school catalogs and course syllabi, as well as in program promotional materials. Educational objectives for departments, schools, and the university are typically published in strategic plans, but could be more widely disseminated through catalogs and by display on the website. In addition to the program level, evidence is gathered at the school and university levels using such assessment instruments as HERI, NSSE, and CLA. These results are disseminated to key constituents throughout the university by the office

of Educational and Institutional Research. A more rigorous schedule for the dissemination of data and feedback from the units on how the information is used to make improvements is under construction.

Pepperdine's well-established and fully funded program review process is our mechanism for recognizing and evaluating the educational objectives within each program throughout the institution. These academic program reviews are owned primarily by the faculty, but also by the department chairs, deans, and the central university planning committee. As each program enters its second iteration of the five-year review cycle, a cycle which began in 2003, the focus is intentional--on clarifying educational objectives, establishing and tracking indicators, and continuing to gather direct evidence in order to ensure that student learning outcomes are being achieved across the institution. In particular, the comprehensive review of the newly minted GE program employs several scoring rubrics used by the review team and the faculty members who teach in the GE program to measure GE outcomes and to provide a means of establishing acceptable levels of performance in the GE program. An example of these rubrics is attached: "GE Writing Intensive Rubric".

**2.1 The institution's educational programs are appropriate in content, standards, and nomenclature for the degree level awarded, regardless of mode of delivery, and are staffed by sufficient numbers of faculty qualified for the type and level of curriculum offered.**

Action: The institution's educational programs, including the content, standards, nomenclature, and mode of delivery, receive close scrutiny by the faculty of the university through departmental, school, and university-wide faculty governance processes. Program faculty initiate curriculum proposals to their departments and divisions. Before they can be implemented, these proposals must be approved also by the school level academic councils, as well as by the University Academic Council chaired by the provost. Many academic programs also achieve specialized accreditation.

A rigorous process is in place for hiring new tenure-track faculty, including a thorough vetting by the program faculty and ultimately, an interview with the president. Full-time non-tenure-track faculty members are interviewed by the program faculty and ultimately by their dean. The adjunct faculty are hired by program faculty and the department chair.

All faculty members undergo consistent evaluation by students through course evaluations and by supervisors. Tenure-track faculty members undergo periodic peer review, as well.

All academic programs have established their ideal ratio of full and part-time faculty. Many programs consistently achieve the balance they desire, but in some programs additional full time faculty have been requested. The deans are responsible for maintaining these standards, and for requesting additional funds for new faculty hires to the University Planning Committee during the annual budget hearings.

The program review mechanism has proven to be helpful in evaluating and addressing program standards (an educational effectiveness issue) and staffing (a capacity issue) already with a number of programs, e.g., English, Sociology, and Advertising. In particular, each of these programs is intentionally focused on setting and meeting minimum standards of learning performance, as prescribed, wherever possible, by the discipline's professional organizations and associations. In addition, the external review component of the program review creates a benchmark comparison with other universities that the faculty admire and wish to emulate.

**2.4 The institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members (including faculty, students, staff, and where appropriate, external stakeholders). The institution's faculty takes collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating the attainment of these expectations.**

Action: The faculty sets expectations for student learning and attainment primarily through the rigor of its course syllabi, approved by the University Academic Council,

Other methods for establishing and communicating expectations for learning and attainment include discussion at academic clubs, standards for honor societies, emphasis on countering grade inflation, hosting distinguished speakers on discipline specific topics, achievement of academic awards such as Fulbright scholarships, and faculty/student research. The mission of the university articulates not only high academic expectations for students, but also high personal standards for character and service. These personal standards are supported by weekly convocation programs, standards for community living, opportunities to participate in service learning, and more in the co-curricular arena. At Pepperdine, a strong ethos prevails and is communicated initially in the admission process, that students are expected to achieve at high levels and to be committed to character development at a high standard.

The program review process is designed to be the primary mechanism whereby faculty obtain and review evidence of student learning. This process, which commenced formally in 2003, becomes more effective with each passing year of experience. To advance faculty knowledge on methods for obtaining evidence, the annual fall university-wide Faculty Conference for 2008 focused on assessment and student learning, featuring expert Peggy Maki and presentations from alumni on learning experiences that most affected them. See the attached description: "Faculty Conference Alumni Event".

Finally, in an effort to keep assessment activity at the forefront, our office of Educational and Institutional Research sends out a biweekly EIR report to all university faculty, staff, and administration on research trends in higher education and ongoing results of assessment activities within our academic community. In addition, the office of

Educational and Institutional Research maintains a web presence that regularly broadcasts results from Pepperdine's participation in national surveys and studies.

**2.5 The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning, challenge them to achieve high expectations, and provide them with appropriate and ongoing feedback about their performance and how it can be improved.**

Action: The institution-wide program review process is the primary system upon which Pepperdine relies to monitor and improve the ways in which students are challenged and provided with formative feedback. The program review data collected since 2003 confirms that Pepperdine has in place clearly articulated learning outcomes and high impact learning experiences (learning communities, international program study, service learning, research with faculty, off-campus internships, and capstone courses) that require high performance by our students. However, we do recognize the need to strengthen our feedback mechanisms to students in order to assist in their performance improvement. Thus, this area as a key research question in our upcoming CPR and EER as we continue to sharpen and deepen the ongoing program review work across the institution.

**2.6 The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment and ensures that its expectations for student learning are embedded in the standards faculty use to evaluate student work.**

Action: The program review process, during its first-five year cycle, has accomplished significant foundational work by articulating learning objectives and assessing student learning. During the next five-year cycle, we will incorporate ongoing annual reviews in addition to the major five-year reviews. In addition we will assess the students upon their completion of their academic program and embed program objectives into the course syllabi. For example, GE learning outcomes currently are published in the Seaver College catalog and displayed on the website. Next steps will require greater intentionality to help students become familiar with the learning objectives, and to encourage the faculty to provide students with ongoing feedback on their attainment of these goals. These advances can be achieved by encouraging the inclusion of the desired learning outcomes for the program and for the course on course syllabi, and by greater awareness of faculty feedback to students during the faculty annual evaluation and rank, tenure, and promotion process.

The assessment of graduate's level of attainment occurs now in some programs through a capstone course, a standard Pepperdine exit interview, surveys to the alumni, and conversations with alumni such as the one that occurred at the recent faculty conference where representative alums were invited to share their lasting learning experiences. Greater deliberation in assessing the graduates' level of attainment will require additional capstone courses and measures of assessment, an area we hope to improve upon as we consider using such instruments as the CLA.

## **2.8 The institution actively values and promotes scholarship, curricular and instructional innovations, and creative activity, as well as their dissemination at levels and of the kinds appropriate to the institution's purposes and character.**

Action: Pepperdine highly values faculty scholarship, especially as a critical component of excellent teaching. New tenure-track faculty candidates are hired for their potential as both teachers and researchers. Many of the new faculty arrives with an already established research program. Faculty researchers may apply for in-house funding to cover travel and subject costs, reduced teaching loads, sabbaticals, and receive staff assistance in applying for external grants. Recently, Seaver College enacted a new policy of giving junior faculty one less course to teach, in order to encourage their scholarly production. Also, the Seaver College Rank, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) committee is revising the RTP guidelines, to encourage scholarship.

Curricular innovation is also encouraged at the university. A Center for Teacher Excellence at Seaver College provides development and discussion within the faculty to stimulate shifts in pedagogy and support for teaching. Grants are available to the faculty from the Chief Information Officer to integrate the use of technology into learning.

In addition, a number of forums for promoting scholarship and instructional innovation are offered, including our Endowed Chair Program, University Library Lecture Series, W. David Baird Distinguished Lecture Series, Howard A. White Teaching Awards, Center for Teaching Excellence Workshops, Center for Faith and Learning workshops and study groups, various departmental/division level colloquia, Convocation Lecture Series, as well as several student honors societies who host distinguished guests.

Each year Pepperdine offers greater support for faculty research, however, the faculty appetite for scholarship is great and will require additional support as the university matures.

## **3.2. The institution demonstrates that it employs a faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution sufficient in number, professional qualifications, and diversity to achieve its educational objectives, to establish and oversee academic policies, and to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever and however delivered.**

Action: Pepperdine's program review protocol addresses matters of faculty capacity at the program level, including the ongoing monitoring, evaluating and recommending of the number of faculty employed in each area and the diversity in each department. Recommendations to add to the full time faculty are generated by the program faculty, reviewed by the department or division chair and the dean of the school, and presented by the dean of the school to the University Planning Committee during the annual budget cycle. In addition to those requests generated by the faculty to teach specific academic

content, the University Strategic Plan calls for the addition of several distinguished faculty members to stimulate scholarship and to enhance the intellectual dialogue.

The University and Seaver College Diversity Councils are engaged with the issues of faculty and curricular diversity. Their most recent participation in the AAC&U Greater Expectations Institute will bring about substantive progress in these areas in the coming years. In particular, their plan includes the attached scope of work – see “Diversity Initiative”.

### **3.4. The institution maintains appropriate and sufficiently supported faculty development activities designed to improve teaching and learning consistent with its educational objectives and institutional purposes.**

Action: Currently, several support systems undergird faculty professional development activities at Pepperdine. The university hosts an annual university-wide two-day Faculty Conference on topics related to teaching and scholarship. The most recent conference addressed the topic of the assessment of student learning. In addition to the university-wide conference, each of the schools sponsors a beginning of the year retreat for its faculty. The university’s Center for Faith and Learning offers seminars for faculty and staff, including a week-long annual seminar for new full-time faculty at one of Pepperdine’s overseas locations. Seaver College sponsors a Center for Teaching Excellence that engages its faculty in discussion about teaching and offers seminars and classroom feedback. , See the attachment “Center for Teaching Excellence Events”. Each of the schools provides some form of peer participation in the evaluation of teaching, and the benefit of student evaluations of teaching. Finally, Information Technology offers support for teaching using technology through a technology liaison program at Seaver College, and through similar means at the other schools. Additional opportunities to learn new pedagogies, especially those using technology, is necessary for the Pepperdine faculty.

### **3.5. Fiscal and physical resources are effectively aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives, and are sufficiently developed to support and maintain the level and kinds of educational programs offered both now and for the foreseeable future.**

Action: The University Planning Committee (UPC) is charged with aligning the fiscal, physical, and human resources of the university with its mission, purposes, and objectives. Composed of 19 administrators and three representative faculty members, including the president, provost, and the deans of the schools, the UPC conducts the strategic planning and the budgeting activities for the university. The UPC produces the five-year strategic plan, sets annual university-wide priorities, and allocates resources for strategic priorities. The University Planning Committee could become more effective if it were to achieve better consistency, greater transparency, and improved communication with the university community. Efforts to that effect are underway.

During the past eight years, the university has been committed to growing quality rather than enrollment. To that end, a campaign has been approved by the Board of Regents to raise funds to support the university's growing appetite for quality. While Pepperdine's current resources are sufficient to maintain the current undergraduate and professional programs, increased quality through distinguished faculty, improved facilities, winning athletic teams, engaged alumni, and additional student financial aid, will require fund raising.

**3.6. The institution holds, or provides access to, information resources sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and kind to support its academic offerings and the scholarship of its members. For on-campus students and students enrolled at a distance, physical and information resources, services, and information technology facilities are sufficient in scope and kinds to support and maintain the level and kind of education offered. These resources, services and facilities are consistent with the institution's purposes, and are appropriate, sufficient, and sustainable.**

Action: Since 2005 Pepperdine University has made significant investments in technology infrastructure, Web-based administrative and learning management systems, and tools designed to assist faculty more fully integrate technology into their teaching, learning, and service activities. The University network has been re-architected and now provides service that meets or exceeds service available at peer and aspirational institutions. Total bandwidth has been increased 6x; internal bandwidth to graduate campuses has been increased up to 10x; and 200 additional wireless access points have been install University-wide. The institutions' work in this area has been recognized through the granting of member in Internet2. In terms of Web-based services, a PeopleSoft finance, human resources, and student implementation has just been completed providing real-time access to information and processes on a 24/7 basis. The University-wide Learning Management System (Blackboard) was also upgraded and now includes additional features such as content sharing and virtual classrooms. The University also, on an annual basis, invests significant resources for digital library content to support both teaching and learning.

To properly assess the quality of services and to insure that trends in faculty and student expectations are considered proactively the University administers an annual Web-based survey through the Higher Education TechQual+ Project. This instrument provides substantial insight into faculty and student perceptions and provide data crucial to the establishment of priorities through an annual planning process. A new position was created in 2008, Assistant CIO for Strategic Planning, who is responsible for conducting these assessments, analyzing the data, and leading the IT division through an annual process of assessment, planning, and execution.

**3.7. The institution's information technology resources are sufficiently coordinated and supported to fulfill its educational purposes and to provide key academic and administrative functions.**

Action: Annual assessments conducted through the Higher Education TechQual+ Project, administered beginning in 2007, provide the detailed information necessary to ensure that the delivery and operation of technology services are consistent with faculty and student needs and expectations. In 2008, the CIO completed the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for technology and learning that focuses on the twin topics of faculty development and faculty support. The plan links together the need to support faculty and students with the wide array of technology services provided by the IT division. This plan is currently being finalized through consultation with the University faculty and will be revised annually as a part of the CIO's IT strategic planning process.

### **3.8. The institution's organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear, consistent with its purposes, and sufficient to support effective decision making.**

Action: The president is advised by a steering committee that convenes weekly, comprising the provost, executive vice president, and three vice-presidents all together who represent the operational areas of the university, as well as the chief financial officer, and the president's chief of staff. The University Planning Committee, chaired by a senior vice president, makes recommendations on strategy and budget to the president. The Dean's Council, chaired by the provost, makes recommendations on academic administration. The Chief's Council, chaired by the executive vice president, makes recommendation on facilities, security, and finance. While most tactical decisions are made by these respective areas, strategic and policy decisions are ultimately made by the president and approved by the Board of Regents.

The president communicates regularly with the entire university community through monthly briefings webcast for broad participation and memos when specific issues impacting the campus arise. In addition to improving effective communication, discussion with each of the committees on how and where decisions are made is in order to improve the decision making process.

### **3.10. The institution has a chief executive whose full-time responsibility is to the institution, together with a cadre of administrators qualified and able to provide effective educational leadership and management at all levels.**

Action: The president is a full-time employee who divides his time between external fund raising and internal operational activities. The Board of Regents evaluates his work annually. The president is supported by a provost, executive vice president for finance and administration, a vice president for advancement, a senior vice president for investments, and a senior vice president for planning, information, and technology, as well as a chief of staff. The deans of the five schools are vetted by the faculty and appointed by the provost and president. The faculty evaluates the deans on a five-year cycle. Our senior leadership team is addressing this CFR, through close collaboration with the University Faculty Council. That group is using the UCLA Triennial Faculty Survey data, most recently

gathered in spring 2008, in order to examine the ways that our institution manages itself and brings about educational effectiveness.

**3.11. The institution's faculty exercises effective academic leadership and acts consistently to ensure both academic quality and the appropriate maintenance of the institution's educational purposes and character.**

Action: The faculty exercises leadership through the faculty organizations at each of the schools and through the University Faculty Council which functions much like a faculty senate. In addition, each school maintains an academic council that reviews proposals for curriculum change. The University Academic Council reviewed proposals approved by the school councils. In addition, every academic unit is undergoing continuous program review of all of its academic programs, with quality being at the forefront of every assessment protocol.

**4.2. Planning processes at the institution define and, to the extent possible, align academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs with the strategic objectives and priorities of the institution.**

Action: The University Planning Committee is charged with overseeing the alignment of academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs with university priorities.. The emerging university strategic plan will help to unify these processes. Furthermore, the information technology department is in the process of developing a plan that aligns with the priorities stated in the strategic plan.

**4.3. Planning processes are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data, and include consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness, including student learning.**

Action: The office of Educational and Institutional Research provides both quantitative and qualitative data to the University Planning Committee in a timely fashion for effective decision-making. Appropriate data are also provided to faculty program review committees. The newly constituted office of Educational and Institutional Research is developing a consistent schedule for the analysis, production, and dissemination of data that will no doubt improve the effectiveness of routine decision-making at Pepperdine.

**4.5. Institutional research addresses strategic data needs, is disseminated in a timely manner, and is incorporated in institutional review and decision-making processes. Included among the priorities of institutional research function is the identification of indicators and the collection of appropriate data to support the assessment of student learning consistent with the institution's purposes and educational objectives.**

Action: The office of Institutional Research has recently been transformed into a group that is able to more fully address the matters raised by this CFR. See the attachment entitled "Evolution of EIR" at the end of section C.1. Every program review includes a set of

student learning metrics that it continuously monitors in order to measure program quality. In addition, the office of Educational and Institutional Research (EIR) maintains a set of dashboard indicators on the health of the institution, providing both longitudinal measures as well as comparisons with peer and aspirational institutions. Our Board of Regents reviews these dashboards annually.

**4.7. The institution, with significant faculty involvement, engages in ongoing inquiry into the processes of teaching and learning, as well as into the conditions and practices that promote the kinds and levels of learning intended by the institution. The outcomes of such inquiries are applied to the design of curricula, the design and practice of pedagogy, and to the improvement of evaluation means and methodology.**

Action: Pepperdine's comprehensive, university wide program review process is the methodology used to address these areas of concern. These reviews occur in two forms: a) annual reviews, and b) five-year reviews, which work together to create a seamless, continuous, sustainable process of assessment for all programs. See the attached "Annual Review Guide" and "Program Review Ingredients" for more details on these two protocols