

Dominican University of California

Accreditation Review for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Institutional Proposal

October 2005

Institutional Context

University Background

Dominican University of California is an independent, international, learner-centered university with a Catholic heritage and a tradition of interdisciplinary study in the liberal arts, a global perspective, and a strong commitment to involving students in fostering their own intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and social development. The University offers undergraduate education in the liberal arts and the sciences and selected undergraduate and graduate professional programs.

Chartered by the State of California as a women's college in 1890, Dominican College of San Rafael became fully coeducational in 1971. By 2000, the enrollment and the number and variety of undergraduate and graduate programs had expanded to that of a small university and the name of the institution was changed to Dominican University of California. Much planning and work has focused on the transition from a liberal arts college to a comprehensive university and the accreditation process is viewed as an opportunity to review how well the institution has accomplished this transition. Currently 1,396 undergraduate 337 graduate, and 215 credential students are enrolled and 21 undergraduate and 7 graduate majors are offered. The University awards the BA, BFA, BS, BSN, MA, MBA, MS, MAM, MFT, MPA, MSN, and MSOT degrees and also confers the Education Credential. In addition to the San Rafael campus programs, degree programs in Education and Strategic Management are presently offered in Ukiah in Mendocino County. The most recent approval from the WASC Substantive Change committee was obtained in March 2005 for the Bachelor of Arts in Strategic Management, a collaborative program with Mendocino College which involves a combination of traditional classroom and online teaching methods.

The University's heritage as an institution of higher education founded on the Dominican ideals of love of truth, beauty, and the life of the mind, and a deep respect for the dignity and worth of the individual is as important in the present as it has been in the past. As stated in its mission, the University strives to integrate these traditional values into the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills needed in today's changing world. The essential components of a Dominican education: study, reflection, service, and community, are evident in the educational aims of the University and its academic and co-curricular programs.

Strengths

In 2004, members of the Dominican University Strategic Planning Committee conducted a series of stakeholder focus groups to gather input on the perceived strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the University. The following strengths were most frequently mentioned:

- Qualified, committed, and caring faculty
- Quality academic programs offering a selection of courses
- An appreciation and respect for diversity
- Small class sizes and accessible faculty
- Attention to Dominican values and traditions
- Recreational facilities available
- Beautiful setting in a convenient location

Challenges

The above survey also resulted in the identification of the following weaknesses to be address in the strategic planning process:

- Limited range of academic programs
- High tuition costs
- Inconsistent communication flow within the campus community
- Space and parking constraints
- Insufficient library resources
- Lack of endowment and other funds to supplement tuition revenue
- Desired reputation in Bay Area not yet established

Additional challenges are the areas viewed as threats by the focus group participants. These include:

- Strong competition from other institutions
- Neighborhood objections to increased enrollment, campus events, and building plans
- Cuts in government funding to offset tuition costs
- Increased cost of living in Bay Area

Commendations and Issues Raised in Last Review

The last report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Associations of Schools and Colleges was submitted by the WASC visiting team following a Fifth-Year visit conducted March 2-4, 2004. The Fifth-Year visit and report focused on recommendations resulting from the 1999 Reaffirmation Visit to the University. Dominican was commended for the following:

- Additional progress in becoming a learner-centered institution through further development of its student learning outcomes assessment program
- Significant improvements in student recruitment and enrollment management
- Continuing a focus on African-American, Latino, Asian-American, and Native American (ALANA) students in recruitment and financial aid
- Ongoing effort to clarify the University's transformation from a liberal arts focus to a comprehensive institution and to make that transformation effective
- Significant progress in building a mutual understanding and shared set of expectations in regard to faculty development objectives and opportunities and, as financial planning permits, making available on an on going basis resources

- faculty will need for their continued professional development and teaching improvement
- Commitment to diversifying the institution from faculty hires and undergraduate and graduate admissions to changes in the curriculum
 - Effort to improve technology as an effective means of instruction and as an influential tool to increase the library's uses of technology through the acquisition of online resources and electronic accessibility
 - Making planning strategic rather than tactical as manifested in enrollment management, development of new courses, restructuring of the academic and non-academic areas, budgeting and financial forecasts, and in the area of facilities and deferred maintenance

The major issues addressed by both teams are summarized in Table I (Appendix A). While a number of these issues have been subsequently resolved, some areas continue to be of concern and relevant to the planned review. Continued attention will need to be directed toward:

- A strategic planning process that uses the results of data-gathering and analysis to inform and strengthen the process
- Student retention, particularly retention of commuter students
- Fiscal planning and budgeting to provide continual five year financial projections and investment in necessary resources
- Full implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment program with support and engagement of all faculty and academic administrators
- Closing the loop by consistently and regularly acting on the findings produced in the assessment process
- A faculty development program that addresses documented needs and supports professional and scholarly advancement
- Clarification and refinement of the faculty tenure and promotion review process
- Increasing the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty
- Sustained implementation of the diversity plan using appropriate indicators to track progress and identify potential disparities
- Continued integration of technology applications into academic and administrative activities to improve learning outcomes, increase efficiency, and reduce costs
- Improvement in library resources to support university level scholarship

Preliminary Self Review

In February 2005, a WASC review steering committee was convened to develop plans for the multi-stage accreditation review process. The committee consisted of seventeen members representing various campus constituencies including a cross-section of faculty, staff, and administration. Six members of the committee had attended the January 2005 WASC workshop for institutions with upcoming reviews and were familiar with steps for proposal development.

The WASC steering committee's first task was to conduct a preliminary self-review in relation to the four WASC standards and the criteria for review. Using the *Worksheet for*

Preliminary Self-Review Under the Standards, the committee members rated each of the criteria in terms of strength and priority. Averages were calculated for each and the criteria ranked accordingly (Appendix B). Subgroups were formed for each standard and were tasked with developing objectives to address the high priority areas needing improvement. The results of this review were distributed to the faculty & staff for feedback. Following the campus input, fifteen objectives were developed (Appendix C). It was then determined which of these objectives should be addressed in preparation for the Institutional Capacity review and which should be components of the Educational Effectiveness review. The committee divided into subgroups to decide what actions were needed to meet the objectives and, if plans were in place, whether these had been implemented, assessed, and analyzed. These objectives are discussed in the following sections along with the recommended actions identified by the steering committee subgroups.

Description of Outcomes

It is expected that the accreditation process will assist the University in moving forward in three key areas in which considerable attention and effort have already been directed. Both the Preparatory and the Educational Effectiveness reviews will be directed toward the first two outcomes. The third outcome reflects the institution's commitment to institutional capacity and is a focus of the preparatory review.

- Establishment of Systems of Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance
A persistent theme in the preliminary self-review and the recent evaluation team reports is the need to more consistently and effectively use appropriate data to assess operational and educational outcomes and to guide strategic planning. Attainment of this outcome requires that in multiple areas and at various levels, quality indicators are identified, data are collected, and the findings are analyzed in order to close the loop that begins and ends with planning.
- Enhancement of Faculty and Student Development and Scholarship
The University seeks to establish student scholarship as a distinctive feature of a Dominican education. Substantial progress has been made in this area in recent years but there is a need to strengthen and sustain current initiatives and to determine their effectiveness. The impact of the tenure and promotion process, implemented in 1996, on the qualifications of faculty is beginning to become apparent in the increased number of full-time faculty with doctorates and the number of publications, research projects, and other scholarly endeavors. Nevertheless, more consistent mentoring and development opportunities for junior faculty and more career invigorative support for senior faculty are needed. Excellent faculty are essential in fostering student development and scholarship and the low faculty/student ratio provides possibilities for quality interactions and collaborative work.
- Identification and Alignment of Resource Needs with Strategic Priorities
The University is committed to an ongoing strategic planning process that will guide decision-making and is currently engaged in the development of an integrated five-year plan. There is a recognized need to become more proactive and less reactive in setting

priorities and allocating resources. A three-year model for budget planning has been introduced and this will compel departments and programs to also move to longer-term planning. Measures to link budget planning more closely with strategic planning have also begun and will need to be more fully integrated.

Constituency Involvement

Campus involvement in the development of the proposal and planning for the review has been a high priority. One of the first steps was to explain the new WASC accreditation process to the various campus constituencies. This was particularly important as less than a year had passed since the fifth year interim visit and the faculty and staff were not prepared for the next review to begin so soon. Discussions of the process and updates on the work of the steering committee were regular agenda topics in meetings of the Provost Council and the Managers Group as well as in faculty and staff retreats, and at the Academic Affairs committee meeting of the Board of Trustees. An initial draft of the proposal was circulated on the campus for review by September 15th and a series of discussion opportunities were scheduled. As students were not actively involved in the preliminary steering committee work, particular effort was made to obtain input from representatives of the student government and other student groups. All documents for review were posted on the WASC website along with updates on the proposal development progress.

Approach for the Institutional Capacity and Preparatory Review

Key Issues

The steering committee determined that a number of the priority areas identified in the preliminary self-review were related to the University's capacity to maintain educational effectiveness. In the past few years, Dominican has worked hard to create the sustainable systems and processes needed to provide the learner-centered environment central to the University's mission. In this review it is important to begin to evaluate the effectiveness of this infrastructure and to identify areas where additions and revisions are needed.

The key topics to be addressed in the preparatory review include:

1. Fiscal issues – financial stability, allocation of resources, and diversification of revenue
2. Human Resource issues – recruitment, hiring, and retention of faculty and staff, faculty and staff development, systematic approach to increase diversity, alignment of performance evaluations with University goals, and determination of faculty resource needs.
3. Strategic planning issues – inclusive, consistent, coherent, and ongoing planning.
4. Quality issues - establishment of continuous improvement and quality assurance processes, and involvement of appropriate stakeholders in assessing outcomes.
5. Campus services issues – sufficient information resources and services, clearly stated and regularly evaluated administrative policies, consistently documented and analyzed responses to complaints and grievances, and an operational student retention plan.

Plan of Action

As part of the preparation for the institutional proposal, the steering committee developed a matrix of priority areas to be included in the preparatory review. Planned actions were identified and the extent to which these have been implemented, assessed, and analyzed were determined. This matrix will serve as a guide for the collection of evidence to be presented in the self-study report for the capacity and preparatory review. In some areas, additional quality assurance indicators will need to be identified and methods for data collection developed.

The proposed action steps and the responsible units (in parentheses) are listed below.

1. Address the need for a recruitment & hiring plan for staff. (Managers Group)
2. Assess and revise the Center for Learning, Innovative Education, and New Technology (CLIENT) to enhance faculty development. (Academic Cabinet)
3. Determine what professional development support for staff is available within departments and identify areas for increasing support campus wide. (Managers Group)
4. Encourage staff to connect to external professional organizations and resources. (Managers Group)
5. Plan the analysis of new initiatives to retain faculty & staff including comparison of information with similar institutions. (Human Resources)
6. Increase the identification and provision of training needed by managers, particularly those whose responsibilities have changed since their initial hire. (Human Resources)
7. Develop a plan for using the data gathered in the new exit survey to create continuous improvement loops within operational departments. (Managers Group Task Force)
8. Follow through with plans to revise the faculty teaching evaluation process. (Faculty Affairs)
9. Research processes and instruments used for 360 degree evaluation of administrators at other institutions and develop a plan for Dominican. (Human Resources)
10. Evaluate the grade appeal process to determine whether revisions are needed. (Academic Cabinet)
11. Develop a plan for collecting data on grade changes and the factors involved. (Institutional Research, Deans)
12. Survey grades assigned by major and class and examine for trends and areas of inconsistency. (Institutional Research, Deans)
13. Analyze academic & fiscal petitions from students to determine patterns and trends. (Petition Committee)
14. Develop a full-time faculty hiring plan to support the strategic plan and provide designated full-time faculty for each graduate program. (Academic Cabinet)
15. Develop a plan for sustaining curriculum transformation to continue diversity enhancement in academic programs. (Diversity Action Group)
16. Continue to plan and seek funds for programs, presentations, and cultural events that enhance diversity learning. (Diversity Action Group)

17. Implement strategies to increase diversity in the applicant pools for faculty, staff, & administrative positions. (Human Resources, Director of Diversity)
18. Plan staff workshops to increase training in culturally sensitive communication with students and families. (Human Resources, Director of Diversity)
19. Commit the resources needed to develop exciting and meaningful study abroad opportunities for students. (President's Executive Council)

Approach for the Educational Effectiveness Review

Areas of Focus and Why Selected

The three themes that have been selected to frame the Educational Effectiveness review are Scholarship, Assessment, and Student Life. These themes were derived from the priority issues identified in the preliminary self-review and are integral to the first two stated outcomes for the accreditation review. While this suggests a special themes approach to the educational effectiveness review, the three themes are also congruent with the goals of the current Integrated Strategic Plan. Each of these themes, the quality assurance methods to be used, and the plan of action to be followed are discussed in the following sections.

Theme #1: Scholarship and Creative Work

Increased expectations for scholarship and creative work accompanied the transition from college to university. The priority objective is that there are clearly defined scholarship expectations for faculty and students and appropriate library resources and academic support are provided. In addition to the need to more closely define expectations, there is the need to determine adequate support, provide proper recognition, and perform appropriate assessment and review with respect to research and creative activities for faculty and students.

Attention to scholarship at Dominican has been gradually increasing during the past few years. Expectations of faculty regarding scholarship and creative work were defined at the time of the adoption of the Review, Promotion, and Tenure policy in 1996, however there continues to be a need to further refine and explain these criteria and to provide the programs and resources that encourage success. Examples of recent initiatives directed toward enhancing faculty scholarship are the Faculty Development grants, the Scholarship of Teaching and Disciplinary Research grants, and the Doctoral Development grants. While interest and participation in these programs have been high, the standards and criteria for assessing their impact on faculty productivity are not clearly defined and the results have not been formally analyzed. There is, however, evidence that the number of faculty publications, shows and performances, and presentations at professional meetings has increased significantly.

Yet unresolved are questions about the scholarship expectations for faculty with significant administrative responsibilities, particularly those with calendar year appointments. Although the University has discussed expanded definitions of scholarship such as Boyer's (*Scholarship Reconsidered*, 1990) categories of, discovery, integration, application, and teaching, there is a lack of agreement on the extent to which scholarship

expectations should differ between academic (9.5 month) and calendar year (12 month) faculty.

The Center for Collaboration, Learning, Innovative Education, and New Technologies (CLIENT), was established in 1999 to provide development support to meet faculty needs in achieving the University's mission of enhancing student learning and improving teaching. Since then, CLIENT has been assigned the responsibility for the new faculty mentoring program and for coordinating community building to bring multidisciplinary faculty groups together to further academic scholarship. Assessment activities related to stated CLIENT outcomes have focused primarily on responses to particular workshops and presentations and attendance at CLIENT sponsored events. The need to conduct a full review of CLIENT and its effectiveness in supporting faculty development and scholarship has been recognized.

Student involvement in research has steadily grown with Dominican's increased participation in the National Council of Undergraduate Research (NCUR). During the past four years, increasing numbers of undergraduate students representing a variety of disciplines have been selected to present their work at the NCUR conference and at other professional conferences such as the Western Psychological Association meeting. In addition, Dominican has been chosen as the site for the 2007 NCUR conference. Much of this success was initiated with the leadership of the chair of the Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in promoting undergraduate research and encouraging faculty to involve students in their own research activities. The efforts to promote faculty/student research collaborations have been further supported by the establishment of the Academic Excellence Initiative, a program offering small grants to faculty/student teams for collaborative projects. A student travel fund has also been created to support increased student participation at professional meetings and conferences. The rapid growth of undergraduate research has placed some unexpected demands for resources on the University and it has been proposed that additional structure and oversight is needed in order to insure that resources are budgeted and fairly allocated.

In spring 2005, the Academic Scholars Program was introduced in order to expand opportunities and recognize student accomplishments in research and scholarship. The culmination of this program was the Academic Showcase, a public presentation of student work in a series of podium presentations and a large poster presentation. These sessions were well attended and received positive feedback. As a result, the University plans to continue this format and integrate it more fully into the academic curriculum. There is a need to assess the current senior project and graduate theses requirements to determine whether they support the level of scholarship Dominican is striving to promote.

A revision of the Honors Program was completed in 2004-2005. The revised program, titled *The Scholar in the World*, is designed to provide a distinctive and enriched curriculum in which students are educated to become creative learners, critical thinkers, writers, and responsible world citizens. The program includes both a service learning and a multicultural requirement. The four ideals of Dominican education: study, reflection,

service, and community, are emphasized. In fall 2005, over 100 students were enrolled in the Honors Program. Although student learning outcomes have been developed for each component of the program and a number of outcome measures have been identified, the data-gathering and analysis has not yet begun.

In summary, the plan of action to address the theme of scholarship in the educational effectiveness review will include:

1. Establish clear standards and criteria for assessing the outcomes of faculty grants
2. Clarify the scholarship expectations of 12-month faculty seeking promotion and tenure
3. Conduct a review of CLIENT and modify structure and programming as indicated to meet faculty needs
4. Continue support for undergraduate research and faculty/student collaboration and identify indicators of quality
5. Assess whether sufficient resources are available to meet scholarship objectives
6. Provide additional structure and oversight for support of faculty and student research to insure that resources are budgeted and fairly allocated
7. Develop and implement a formal assessment plan for the Academic Scholars program and the Academic Showcase
8. Assess the current senior project and graduate theses requirements to determine whether they support the level of scholarship Dominican is striving to promote
9. Implement the planned assessment of the new honors program

Theme #2: Assessment

Full implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan is a key focus in the review process. A priority objective states that assessments of program outcomes are ongoing and inclusive of academic, co-curricular, and non-academic programs and the appropriate stakeholders are involved. In addition, there is the aim that internal indicators of program effectiveness are aligned with external standards of quality in relation to teaching and learning processes and outcomes. In order to meet these objectives, institutional research must be sufficient to support data-driven analysis of student learning and program effectiveness.

The program review plan, *Assuring Educational Effectiveness Through Program Assessment and Program Review*, adopted by the University in 2001, incorporates annual internal assessment with periodic self-study and external reviews for all majors. Student learning outcomes have been developed for all academic programs and are published in the catalog. Additionally, student learning outcomes are required for each course and are included in the course syllabus. Each department is responsible for identifying the outcome measures to be used in assessing learning in its programs and courses. The General Education Committee is responsible for determining the measurements to be used in assessing the General Education Program. The continuous assessment of student learning outcomes needs to be consistently administered across all programs and this will be an area of concentration in preparation for the Educational Effectiveness review.

The Program Assessment and review Plan was developed in 2001 under the leadership of an Education Department faculty member who also served as Director of Assessment. A new Director of Assessment was hired in fall 2004 to oversee the continued implementation of the plan. A committee of six elected faculty members and a Student Life representative assists him. An initial focus in the development of an inclusive and ongoing program assessment process has been the education and mentoring of faculty in order to raise the level of expertise in employing assessment strategies and evaluating learning outcomes. During the past three years, funding has been provided to send members of the committee and other interested faculty to assessment conferences and workshops. A core of faculty with additional assessment knowledge is developing and it is expected that they will contribute to the on campus learning provided in periodic assessment workshops.

Previous experience with external program reviews has produced positive results for the University. In spring 2000, the Center for Undergraduate Research conducted a site visit to assess the science program. The recommendations from that visit provided valuable guidance on the curriculum and the number and qualifications of faculty needed to build a strong program in the natural sciences. Currently Dominican has a growing reputation for excellence in its science education. Although several programs, specifically those with accreditation requirements, have recently undergone external review, the initial timetable for completion of reviews for all programs proved to be too ambitious and was extended. Two programs, Nursing and Occupational Therapy, will complete the internal review process in fall 2005. Four academic programs: Humanities, Natural Sciences, Business, and the Education Credential program will begin the three-semester program review process in fall 2005. The current timetable projects external program reviews for all academic programs to be completed by fall 2009.

The Institutional Research Department has the capacity to support data-driven analysis of student learning and program effectiveness, however the involvement of the Director of Institutional Research and her staff in academic review has been limited. The data sets to be provided to the various departments in their program review and assessment of student learning outcomes have been identified. The process for effectively using these data in program assessment will be further defined in fall 2005 as the four academic programs mentioned above engage in self-study in preparation for external reviews. Additionally, it is important to assist department chairs and faculty to use these data successfully in an ongoing approach to achieving continuous improvement in their programs.

In summary, the plan of action to address the theme of assessment in the educational effectiveness review will include:

1. Continue to implement the plan for annual assessment of student learning outcomes for all academic programs including the undergraduate general education program
2. Insure that appropriate student learning outcome measures are designated for each educational objective
3. Provide additional assessment training for faculty through on-campus workshops and support to attend national conferences

4. Provide the data needed to perform program assessment as outlined in the *Assuring Educational Effectiveness Through Program Assessment and Program Review* plan
5. Complete the program self-studies and external reviews according to the current timetable
6. Demonstrate the use of data in academic planning across all programs
7. Implement the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) as an data gathering tool and evaluate its usefulness in assessing learning outcomes
8. Increase the involvement of the Director of Institutional Research in the program assessment process

Theme #3: Student Life

The desire to be student-focused, offering a variety of programs, curricula, and delivery systems based upon the specific needs of each student in a diverse population, is a component of the primary strategic goal for the University. It is understood that optimal learning takes place in an environment in which there is support for development of the whole person. Dominican is consciously oriented to the intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and social development of students.

The importance of providing students with an educational experience that is relevant to their lives and future careers has led the University to seek further ways to connect academic programs with the Bay Area community. Three key programs, Service Learning, Career Services, and the Leadership Institute are directed toward this goal. Start up funding for a comprehensive service learning program was obtained in 2002 and since then the University has hired a part-time director of service learning, developed an academic course to prepare students for service learning and connect them with opportunities for service, integrated service learning into the new honors program, and created a service learning task force which meets regularly. The University recently joined Campus Compact, a nationwide organization providing networking and support for service learning. Faculty and students have attended national service learning workshops and, as of fall 2005, over 120 students have completed service learning contracts. Although there is much anecdotal evidence of the success of the service learning program, there needs to be a more formal assessment of its effectiveness in terms of student learning outcomes. This will be important as the University considers committing additional resources to sustaining and expanding the program.

Internships with Bay Area businesses and organizations are available to all students and are required for students in certain majors such as Communications and Humanities and Cultural Studies and strongly recommended for students in other majors such as Business and Biology. Programs such as Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Education, and Counseling Psychology are already affiliated with external agencies in order to provide the practice applications required in their curricula. The number of internships in other disciplines has steadily grown under the leadership of the Director of Career and Internship Services. Career and Internship fairs to bring community agencies and local employers to campus have been successfully organized and career and internship counseling services have been expanded. In a spring 2005 Future Plan Survey, 71% of

students responding considered a career center as essential or very important. In the planned review, the effectiveness of the University in providing academic discipline based career services and network building will be assessed. The University has asked the Assistant Vice President for Financial Aid and Career Services to facilitate a Task Force on the development of a three-year plan for Career and Internship Services. The purpose of this Task Force is to assess the needs of the campus community as it relates to Career and Internship Services, and to assess the staffing and resource needs of this unit.

The Institute for Leadership Studies (ILS) is a consortium of faculty and other campus members who work with community leaders to provide leadership development opportunities for students and alumni. Leadership workshops on topics such as *Leading Effective Outreach and Recruitment*, *Event Planning*, and *Running Better Groups and Meetings* are provided through the Student Leadership Academy. Through ILS, students can also participate in programs such as LeaderShape, the Panetta Institute Leadership Seminar, and the Panetta Institute Congressional Internship Program. An assessment plan for the programs offered by ILS is currently being developed.

A priority project for the University is the implementation of a student retention plan that is operational and regularly assessed. A retention committee formed by the Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Management has been meeting for the past two years and a comprehensive plan that addresses multiple areas impacting student life has been developed. A common component embedded in each part of the plan is the collection of data to be integrated into the retention database for research and analysis. Student life is one of the areas of focus in the retention plan. Attention to the quality of student life involves evaluation of the contributions of a variety of extra-curricular programs designed to create a fully rounded campus experience. Included among these are student organizations, intercollegiate and intramural athletics, religious services, recreational and social events, community service and non-credit classes on topics such as health and wellness and leadership. Specifically, the retention plans call for a comprehensive orientation program that will engage participants with other students, ease the transition of entering students to campus, and familiarize them with Dominican's resources, traditions, policies, and rules. Also included are plans to enhance student involvement in student government, clubs, and organizations through the mentorship of student leaders. It is important to note that the new university governance structure provides for increased student participation on campus committees.

Dominican is committed to maintaining a campus climate and infrastructure that promotes multiculturalism and prepares students for living in a diverse and changing world. With the support of several grants from the James Irvine Foundation, the University has made significant progress in developing and implementing strategies to increase the number of African-American, Latino, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) students and faculty and to expand curricular and co-curricular programs related to diversity. In 2001, a Diversity Action Group, chaired by the Director of Campus Diversity Initiatives was formed and was charged with the implementation and assessment of the diversity plan. This work has been ongoing and has enabled the University to monitor progress and make changes as needed to move forward in

achieving its overall diversity goals. It is important that Dominican continues to systematically institutionalize and implement diversity according to the diversity plan and declaration.

In summary, the plan of action to address the theme of student life in the educational effectiveness review will include:

1. Complete the assessment of the Service Learning Program and identify the resources needed to continue its development and expansion
2. Identify student learning outcomes that can be met through internships and develop measures for these outcomes
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of career counseling services in relation to identified student needs and future employment success
4. Assess the impact of the Institute for Leadership Studies in providing leadership training and opportunities for students
5. Continue implementation of the retention plan including the planned evaluation of the process and its contribution to retention
6. Continue implementation and assessment of the diversity plan and evaluate progress toward achieving diversity goals.

Workplan and Milestones

Many of the actions identified in this document have already begun and will be completed in preparation for the Capacity and Preparatory Review in spring 2008. Responsibility, timeline, and outcome measures for each planned action are being determined and the results will be presented in the Capacity and Preparatory Review and Educational Effectiveness reports and as exhibits for site visitors. As already stated, the full cycle of academic program reviews will not be accomplished until fall 2009, however the majority of academic programs will have completed at least one review and the findings will be available to the visiting team.

A Continuous Improvement Steering Committee will provide oversight of the implementation of the action plans. The committee will ensure that systems are in place for collecting and analyzing the data needed to assess effectiveness in each area identified in the planned review and that these systems can be sustained so that a continuous flow of data becomes available to inform planning and decision-making. The committee will also identify faculty and staff development needs related to establishing a “culture of evidence” and will recommend topics to the appropriate departments or committees for further discussion and preparation.

Effectiveness of Data Gathering and Analysis Systems

Data gathering and analysis are interwoven in the reporting processes implemented by the Office of Institutional Research. The Office of Institutional Research has established a Data Warehouse containing a collection of databases, data tables, and mechanisms that is designed to provide frequent information updates and analytical summaries. The Data Warehouse is aimed to be a subject-oriented, integrated, time-variant, nonvolatile collection of data in support of management’s decision-making process. The information

generated by the Office of Institutional Research out of its Data Warehouse is routinely reported both internally and externally.

The source for the Data Warehouse comes from Dominican's central database, IFAS, and the surveys that Dominican conducts annually. The regularly administered surveys include but are not limited to the College Student Inventory (CSI), a freshman survey, and the Exit Survey completed by graduating students and students who leave the University prior to graduation. In addressing the need for assessing student learning outcomes, the University started administering the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) in Fall 2005 to randomly selected groups of freshmen and seniors. The CLA will facilitate data gathering in the areas of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and written communication. The benchmark and comparative data to be used in assessment are stored in the Data Warehouse as well.

A systematic outcome of the data gathering and analysis system is the University Factbook published by the Office of Institutional Research. The University Factbook contains aggregate and trend information on classes, students, enrollment, retention, and employees. It is available on the intranet and updated after Census Day every semester. The plan for more data coverage of the university is being carried out in 2005-2006. Analyzed survey results reported by the Institutional Research are also obtainable online.

Proposal Data Tables

The prescribed data exhibits are presented in Attachment D.

Off-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

Since 1985, Dominican University of California has had an off campus program in Ukiah 95 miles north of San Rafael. This site has been officially recognized by WASC. Until recently, the primary program has been the professional preparation credential program. Approximately thirty candidates earn their teaching credentials each year in Ukiah. In the fall of 2004 Dominican contacted WASC to make a substantive change to allow for an undergraduate degree in strategic management in a 2 plus 2 program with Mendocino College. The substantive change was approved and Dominican University of California began offering courses in spring 2005. The courses are offered partially on-line and the major discussion with WASC focused on Dominican's readiness to offer on-line instruction. Both programs offered in Ukiah are scheduled for review in the assessment and program review plan.

During the last WASC site visit Dominican University of California offered a professional preparation credential program in Solano County. Due to a decline in enrollment, the program will no longer be offered after 2005-06.

Institutional Stipulations

- Dominican University of California is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments; we will engage in the process with seriousness and the data presented will be accurate and will fairly present the institution.

- Dominican University of California has published and publicly available policies in force as identified by the Commission in Appendix 1 of the WASC Handbook. Such policies will be available for review on request throughout the period of accreditation.
- Dominican University of California will abide by procedures adopted by the Commission to meet United States Department of Education (USDE) procedural requirements.
- Dominican University of California will submit all regularly required data, and any data specifically requested by the Commission during the period of Accreditation.
- Dominican University of California has reviewed its off-campus programs and distance degree programs to ensure that they have been approved as required by the WASC Substantive Change process.

Joseph R. Fink
President

Attachments

Attachment A: Major Issues and Recommendations from Previous WASC Visits

Attachment B: Summary of Preliminary Self-Review

Attachment C: Priority Areas for Review

Attachment D: Data Exhibits for the Proposal

Data Element 1 – Headcount Enrollment by Level

Data Element 2 – Headcount Enrollment by Status and Location

Data Element 3 - Degrees and certificates Granted by Level

Data Element 4 – Faculty by Employment Status

Data Element 5 – Key Financial Ratios

Data Element 6 – Educational Effectiveness Indicators