REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

To Pepperdine University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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I. **OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

A. Description of the Institution and Visit

Pepperdine University was founded in 1937 by George Pepperdine, a businessman who established the Western Auto Supply Company and was a lifelong member of the Churches of Christ. For its first 30 years, Pepperdine was a small, mostly undergraduate Christian college located in downtown Los Angeles. Graduate and professional schools were added in 1970, allowing university status to be achieved. In 1972, the University opened its newly constructed Malibu campus.

Pepperdine is an independent, medium-sized university enrolling approximately 7,600 students (around 6,000 FTE) in five colleges and schools. Its student/faculty ratio, based on FTE, is about 12.4. Its Mission Statement is as follows: "Pepperdine is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership."

The University awards Bachelor's (38), Master's (25), Research Doctorate (4), and Professional Doctorate (2) degrees. Seaver College, the School of Law, and the School of Public Policy (SPP) are located on the University's main campus in Malibu. The Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP) and the Graziadio School of Business and Management are headquartered off-campus at Pepperdine's West Los Angeles regional center, as well as having a presence on the Malibu campus. The graduate programs of these two schools are offered also at a second regional center in Irvine, four off-campus sites located within 25 miles of the main campus or regional center, and one off-campus sites located beyond the 25-mile radius. Pepperdine owns five facilities and rents one overseas, and also owns a building in Washington, D.C. where Seaver College undergraduates take courses.

Regional accreditation was first received in 1949. Since accreditation was last reaffirmed in 2001, substantive change approval was granted in 2008 for the Fully Employed MBA to be offered at

Pepperdine's Antelope Valley location. Later in 2008, the Irvine Graduate Campus and West Los Angeles Graduate Campus were recognized as regional centers. In September 2012, while the EER team visit was underway, interim approval was granted for the Fully Employed MBA to be offered by Distance Education. Pepperdine has received specialized accreditation through the following organizations: American Bar Association, American Dietetic Association, American Psychological Association, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and the National Association of Schools of Music.

Following Pepperdine's hosting of a visiting team for its Capacity & Preparedness Review (CPR) in September 2010, the Commission acted to: 1) Receive the CPR report and continue accreditation; 2) Reschedule the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) visit to fall 2012; and 3) Request that the institution incorporate in its EER report its response to issues raised in the CPR team report, namely student learning and assessment, faculty engagement, and evidence-based decision making.

Having received copies of Pepperdine's EER report and supporting documentation, a slightly reconstituted WASC team visited the Malibu campus from September 25-28, 2012. The team commends Pepperdine for the excellent planning and gracious hospitality enjoyed by the team.

Over the course of the visit, the team met with administrators, faculty, staff, and students; additionally, more than 30 confidential emails were received from members of the university community. The team appreciated the willingness of these people to provide information and to share their candid opinions about the University's many strengths as well as the issues and challenges that it faces.

B. The Institution's Educational Effectiveness Review Report

- **Alignment with the Proposal**

Having received a number of criticisms and recommendations from WASC's Proposal Review Committee regarding an earlier version, Pepperdine successfully resubmitted its Institutional Proposal in fall 2008. The team believes that the institution has made substantial progress toward achieving the EER outcomes listed in the proposal, namely:

1. A deeper understanding of student learning, the development of more varied and effective methods of assessing learning, and the use of the results of this process to improve programs and institutional practices;

2. Systematic engagement of the faculty with issues of assessing and improving teaching and learning processes within the institution, and with aligning support systems for faculty more effectively.

- **Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

The team commends the University for the quality of the review and report. It was readily apparent that a great deal of time and energy had been invested in conducting the underlying research, writing the essays, and compiling a substantial amount of supporting documentation. Data had been collected by such means as document reviews (including direct reviews of student work), surveys (local and national), inventories, and discussions with the various constituencies. A key role was played in the preparation of Essay 1 by the Advancement of Student Learning Council (ASLC), comprised of faculty and co-curricular professionals appointed by the provost in collaboration with the deans. The assistant provost of Institutional Effectiveness served ex-officio on the council.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity & Preparatory Review

In its letter to Pepperdine following the CPR review, the Commission summarized the visiting team's recommendations as follows:

> 1) act as expeditiously as possible on results of learning outcomes assessment; 2) create structures that promote collaboration in university governance and support faculty engagement; 3) implement and measure the success of the strategic plan, including university-wide buy-in as an indicator of success; and 4) continue to support diversity efforts, recognizing the importance of campus· climate for the quality of *all* students' educational experiences.

The Commission endorsed these recommendations and noted that "the University should understand that the point, ultimately, is not merely the introduction of new processes - which also can be read as 'results' - but rather the improvement of performance, whether of students, institutional governance, or other aspects of institutional functioning, as a result of these new processes."

The Commission's letter reiterated the CPR visiting team's conclusion in regard to **student learning and assessment** that "overall ... Pepperdine will need to shift its focus from inputs and resources as indicators of quality to a focus on outcomes and student learning results." The letter pointed out that "at the time of the EER visit, the team will expect to see not only processes in place, but also specific *results*" including:

- Articulation and publication of student learning outcomes, performance indicators, and standards of achievement for each degree. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3)
- Fully implemented program-level assessment of student learning outcomes to include graduate as well as undergraduate programs and co-curricular units. Such assessment should employ direct methods, and findings should be used for feedback and improvement at program and institutional levels, with benchmarking of levels of student learning to comparable institutions when feasible. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)
- Implementation of assessment procedures for high-impact practices (HIPs) and use of findings to inform academic budget decisions. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 4.2, 4.4, 4.7); and
- Evidence of successful implementation of the new program review process, incorporation of student learning into it, and program improvements resulting from it. (CFRs 2.7, 4.4)

In regard to *faculty engagement,* the Commission's letter stated:

> At any institution, a vibrant and engaged faculty is essential to institutional renewal, planning, and the implementation of challenging new processes such as assessment. The Commission was pleased that Pepperdine chose to examine this sensitive issue and strongly encourages the University to continue its efforts to engage faculty more fully in the full range of University-wide initiatives, to proceed with work on a revised faculty charter, and to create a risk-free climate that encourages open communication. Evidence of the success of these efforts should be provided at the time of the EER visit. (CFRs 1.7, 2.4, 3.4, 3.8, 3.11, 4.1)

Finally, in regard to *evidence-based decision making,* the Commission's letter stated:

> In multiple areas such as assessment, strategic· planning, financial management, and diversity, the University is likely to benefit from a sharper focus on specific goals, and critical analysis of data to inform strategies and support achievement of those goals. Thus the EER team will look for the following:
>
> - Further development of the role of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (CFR 4.5);
> - Evidence throughout the University of systematic data collection, sharing of data, analysis, and use for decision making (CFRs 4.3, 4.4, 4.6); and
> - Progress on plans for increasing diversity among students, faculty, and staff, supported by data (CFRs 1.5, 3.2).

The EER visiting team applauds Pepperdine for including in an appendix to the EER report a detailed directory of WASC Commission and visiting team recommendations from the CPR, identifying the relevant standards/CFRs and indicating where the University's responses appear in the EER report and/or supporting documentation. The EER report itself is organized around the three themes listed in the Commission's letter: student learning and assessment; faculty engagement; and evidence-based decision-making. Each essay contains an overview of the University's own recommendations (from the CPR self-study) and actions taken to address them; an overview of the Commission recommendations; a discussion of the University's actions in response to the Commission recommendations; and findings in light of the evidence gathered. The team's analysis of Pepperdine's progress and current status is provided in section II, below.

II. EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

A. The Three Themes

- **Student Learning and Assessment**

The institution's response to the WASC Commission's charge regarding student learning and assessment, as framed in Essay 1 of the self-study, shows that Pepperdine has made considerable progress since the CPR visit and has set in place a system for the generation and use of evidence for student learning. The self-study (p.1) asserts, "we believe we have made significant strides toward fully integrating an outcomes-based approach to assess student learning." The evidence provided to the team supports this self-evaluation, although a spectrum of quality was reflected in these efforts. To address the remaining challenges will necessitate work over a time span greater than the period between the CPR and the EER.

Development of Student Learning Outcomes and Publicizing Them

The team found considerable evidence to support the claim that Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) have been developed across the university, degree programs, and courses. These were well-publicized and showcased on the Pepperdine University website, in the catalog and in course syllabi examined. The students met by the team were aware of course and program learning outcomes. (CFR 2.3)

The quality of these outcomes, in terms of both clarity and measurability, varied from school to school. For example, the General Education (GE) Program housed in Seaver College has developed an ambitious slate of 14 student learning outcomes, using multiple measures of each (plus a 15th outcome for the First Year Seminar to be discussed later). Seaver seems to have benefited from the expertise

developed by the Seaver Advancement of Learning Team (SALT) and by an external consultant's GE assessment workshop. Similarly, the work of Graziadio School of Business and Management has been aided by its preparing concurrently for an accreditation visit and feedback from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Although student learning outcomes are fairly well-established across the University, some of the learning outcomes the team found were better written than others, even in the same academic division. Overall, SLOs at Pepperdine were characterized by the team as uneven. Peer evaluation with more professional development, perhaps aided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, could be used to further edit and redraft, refine and validate them. (CFR 2.3)

Creating Performance Indicators and Standards for Each Degree

How well learning outcomes are measured depends, at least in part, on how well they are developed, and ultimately, how reliable and useful are the results obtained from the data produced. Measurement is the next step in a process that should be regarded as iterative. The use of rubrics as performance indicators is widespread at Pepperdine.   These are generally well articulated, although the frequent use of three-category rating scales has some drawbacks. As noted in Graziadio assessment reports, raters sometimes encountered difficulty judging the difference between "meets expectations" and "exceeds expectations." More important is the need to avoid becoming complacent when a majority of 70% or more of students are found to at least "meet" expectations. What about the students who "do not meet expectations"; how well are their needs being addressed? Could a revised rubric with more categories in the scale provide better discrimination? Schools and departments are encouraged to establish ongoing, periodic activities focused on faculty discussions of expectations, their measurements, and their usage. (CFR 2.6)

Exercises in establishing calibration are worthwhile before rubrics are formally applied. Although the team found brief anecdotal evidence of efforts to apply assessment criteria in the same way, it did not find evidence for routine checks for inter-rater reliability. In addition, as the assessment efforts are refined, more attention must be given to the rubrics used to analyze the level of learning, particularly regarding higher order thinking skills. Embedded assessment is an efficient and effective method as the task can be graded as part of a summative assignment and then a sample selected for assessment using a rubric focused on the specific competency connected to the program and institutional outcomes.

Curriculum maps also can become useful guides to subject matter coverage, developmental progression, and alignment with program outcomes. The team noted every school developed curriculum maps for academic programs, but better records of faculty discussion of curriculum matrices and documentation of same in assessment reports would help to flesh out the work being done and the logic behind subsequent decisions. Some, but not all, of this work can be handled by assessment committees if membership rotates and additional faculty have an opportunity to increase their understanding of assessment. Over time, assessment should diffuse throughout the culture. In the Graziadio School of Business the team found evidence of such activity, for example, in the decision to increase coverage of financial risk in courses after the financial crisis of 2007/2008, whereas the emphasis had previously been on other types of risk. To achieve wider diffusion and deeper integration of assessment as a teaching and learning tool, the entire University faculty must become involved. (CFR 4.4)

With a few exceptions, the team did not encounter evidence in the written reports of conversations about teaching with sustained rigor, new pedagogical approaches, or overall quality improvement. The first essay of the self study supplied several discrete examples of actions taken to "close the loop," such as moving content from one course to another or offering courses in different semesters to accommodate students going abroad, but these tended to be more about easy fixes like

scheduling rather than new teaching strategies to elevate the quality of student learning. The on-site discussions with faculty did reveal that assessment caused them to look at teaching practices; for example, the business faculty and public policy faculty clarified the purpose and outcomes of internships resulting in greater attention to setting expectations for students and supervisors. With Centers for Teaching and Learning in the colleges and good technology infrastructure, Pepperdine is well positioned to use assessment findings to broaden its commitment to high quality learning and guide innovation in pedagogy. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)

Establishing Faculty Collective Responsibility for Assessment Processes and Assessing Faculty Ownership of these Processes

Faculty have made significant progress since the CPR in taking ownership and establishing collective responsibility for assessment processes. The establishment of the ASLC as a leadership and peer mentoring body is a good approach for generating widespread buy-in and continuing to build capacity for assessment of student learning. The role of the ASLC appears to be widely accepted by faculty and administrators throughout the University, and its work is supported by the resources and methodological expertise of OIE. The University Academic Council now requires evidence from assessment reports and program reviews as part of their approval process, which is a new development since the CPR. Members of the ASLC as well as members of the UAC remarked on the fact that the ASLC's feedback reports have shown more sophistication this year than last. Faculty conversations demonstrate an appreciation for a new common language for talking about teaching and learning across programs and across Schools. While the degree of engagement and quality of the assessment practices vary across programs, traction is clearly established throughout the University and faculty have demonstrated collective ownership of the processes. All of this is concerted progress since the time of the CPR. (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 2.11, 3.4)

Program Review

Pepperdine University has recently revised its handbook on program review to include external reviews and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A review of the quality and effectiveness of program review conducted under the new guidelines shows that the self studies are comprehensive and detailed, and that the role of the ASLC and deans ensures accountability. The program reviews use multiple sources of data balancing qualitative and quantitative information on quality as well as career demand, enrollment data, and financial analysis for viability. The program review documents are extensive but need greater attention in the future to analysis and implications. For example, drawing out key themes, rather than including all the comments from student satisfaction surveys, would be sufficient and more informative. (CFRs 2.7, 4.3) Some attention might be paid to both the wording on the many surveys and the number of responses to be sure the data collected are valid and useful to support thoughtful actions items for improving student learning and the learning environment. (CFRs 2.5, 4.8)

Whereas the MOU is a good step to connect deans to the faculty who will follow through on what has been learned through the review process, there, too, is room for improvement. The chart summarizing the 2011 MOUs reveals a tendency to give greater attention to requests for resources and less attention to specific concerns and ideas about the teaching and learning process. Both are important to ensuring quality in programs. (CFR 4.2)

Another area that could be strengthened is an overview of the themes that develop in several of the program reviews rather than treating each just on its own terms. The ASLC is well positioned to identify overarching themes relevant to the institution's effectiveness and quality. Coupled with OIE work tracking specific trends, this information can support the strategic planning process and help

Pepperdine see both the details and the big picture. These are the elements of a "learning organization," prepared to adjust to the rapidly changing higher education context. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1, 4.4)

To some extent, the professional graduate programs have benefitted when able to connect program review to the specialized accreditation cycle. Access to information about changes in the field, career opportunities, and professional competency standards are used to provide the context for the on-campus review process. The specialized accreditation process also often provides a detailed external analysis of the programs. Licensure exams provide direct evidence of exit outcomes as well as the opportunity to compare Pepperdine to other schools. Alumni data are used as indirect evidence of the quality and impact of the programs. Despite the work involved in fulfilling the requirements of two processes, faculty report that the level of collaboration strengthens their programs. (CFRs 2.7, 4.1)

The Student Voice in Assessment

One of the recommendations made to the institution after the CPR visit was that student participation be incorporated into assessment plans. The team did not see evidence that this has yet been accomplished (for example, one option would have been to establish student roles on the ASLC). The team encourages Pepperdine not to limit students to participation in course evaluations, focus groups, or brief conversations with external reviewers during campus visits. Students can be given opportunities to observe and participate in a variety of forms of assessment beyond the grade, so they may assume greater ownership of their own learning. The self study undoubtedly would have been enriched by greater inclusion of the student voice in the narrative.

The faculty spoke with enthusiasm about their students' learning and frequent positive interactions. In separate sessions students affirmed their appreciation for the small classes, availability of instructors outside of class, instructor expertise, and hospitality in hosting students in faculty homes. The team encourages the inclusion in future self study narratives of these types of descriptions of the

learning environment to obtain a balance between quantitative and qualitative data sources. Descriptions of assessment activities in capstone and senior seminar courses, artistic performances in theater and music, and public presentations of student work as the Seaver seniors neared completion of their studies were particularly rich and detailed the role of faculty mentoring and high expectations in the students' achievements. The team experienced new insights, not reflected in the self study, from well-attended group meetings with both faculty and students during the campus visit. (CFRs 2.5,4.8)

Student Affairs and Co-Curricular Assessment

Student Affairs, relying on Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards, did not have WASC-style outcomes assessment plans prior to 2010. They did have, however, a long history of data collection and emphasis on improvement. Now all of the Student Affairs units follow the student learning outcomes, annual reports, and program review procedures. The assessment plans vary in quality and format, ranging from a one page chart aligned with the four major student learning outcomes and indicating how the data will be gathered (Campus Recreation and Convocation) to longer plans with specific outcomes (Student Activities and Student Employment). In most cases the evidence comes from surveys and focus groups rather than any direct assessment. Nonetheless, it is evident that Student Affairs participates in and gains insight from the process. (CFR 2.11)

For example, the Student Activities review provides participation rates, highlights from surveys, and data such as a comparison of GPAs between Greek and non-affiliated students. The actions taken by staff as well as by other units with which the results were shared show an effort to make the process make a difference, for example, improving the Orientation program to emphasize academic expectations. The Summary and Reflections section is remarkably candid as it indicates both strengths and weaknesses of each unit within Student Activities, some the result of recent reductions in staff. The

Goals, Actions, and Quality Improvement Plan is realistic, except that each timeline says "when possible." Given that program review is on a five year cycle, specific deliverables and a timeline would be essential to guide annual reports on progress. The external review was extensive and helpful, with a good balance of praise and recommendations, and provided an analysis based on standards for the profession. (CFR 2.7)

Despite good intentions and a high level of detail, the team notes that the information and analysis were not necessarily aligned with the stated learning outcomes and, instead, emphasized process issues such as "modify the club registration process" and "modify the Waves of Flag event." The institutional self study (p.12) notes, "As the work in Student Affairs falls outside the academic realm, more ingenuity is required to develop curriculum maps and rubrics." Perhaps this might be true of the health center or counseling program but certainly not for most other areas where activities and purpose must align with the institutional objectives. Greater attention to learning outcomes will be necessary to fulfill the potential of assessment and program review in Student Affairs. (CFR 2.11)

The Student-Led Ministries program review demonstrates a conscientious connection between the learning outcomes and the review processes. The external reviewers made helpful, overarching observations that demonstrate the importance of looking for the larger themes that emerge from review processes that impact institutional effectiveness as opposed to focusing on process matters such as improving attendance at an event. The OIE Research Brief on *Exploring Spiritual Growth at Seaver College* is a good example of sharing with the campus the context for an institutional goal that is also followed up on in program review.

Although the work in co-curricular assessment has advanced at Pepperdine since the team's last visit, much work remains. Co-curricular assessment activities and experiences need to be viewed as loci of learning and aligned with aspects of classroom learning. Faculty members can become proactive by

taking the initiative in working with co-curricular staff to align their work with what is being done in

classrooms. The Payson Library as an academic support area provides evidence of active engagement in

its new learning center, information literacy plans, and in the speaker's forum. The New Student

Orientation and Transfer/International Student Orientation programs provided evidence that these

programs would benefit from developing better program outcomes and assessment with increased

faculty input as well as greater student input. (CFRs 2.5, 2.11, 2.14)

General Education Programs and Summative Assessment

The GE program is an essential element of the Pepperdine University undergraduate experience

and emphasizes areas of knowledge, college level skills, and values consistent with the overarching

institutional goals. In addition to required distribution courses for each GE component, students take a

First Year Seminar and a research course in their major and are able to explore some thematic course

options. All areas of the General Education Program were reviewed in 2011-2012.

The GE Program faculty did an excellent job of achieving transparency in its work, not only

through the posting of well-developed outcomes on its website, but also by posting the results of its

initial round of measurement activities, and being willing to be openly self critical. Each outcome has a

link to the relevant data acquired, analyzed, conclusions drawn, and a discussion of next steps to be

taken. This work needs to be championed, and paced to allow more time for reflection, because it

involves marshalling forces from a variety of disciplines. The program now has baseline information

and a realistic timetable for addressing each area over the next five years. (CFRs 4.6, 4.7)

Although the framework for the assessment reports provides alignment of the specific GE

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for an area with the Institutional Educational Outcomes (IEOs),

because so many courses fit into some of the areas, only a list of courses rather than a careful curriculum

map is the basis for the assessment. For example, for Non-Western Cultures, a small subset of the

courses based on enrollments, was selected for assessment with the expectation that 70% of the students would meet the outcome at a satisfactory level.

As next steps the GE faculty may wish to focus on a smaller number of learning outcomes, for example writing proficiency and/or higher order critical thinking skills. Now that the structure and process is in place, what is called for are deeper levels of exploration regarding meaning in the data with respect to outcomes. Making sense of learning is a complex undertaking promising proven long-term rewards. The goal is an explanation of how the student GE experiences affect demonstrated learning at beginning, mid-point, and senior completion levels in a developmentally aligned progression. This work using direct, customized longitudinal data ought to reflect increasing rigor in teaching and learning over time. Indirect evidence from the Higher Education Research Institute's (HERI) survey benchmarking against other schools is good but insufficient summative assessment. Faculty expectations and courses aligned with the student learning outcomes will require careful selection. Results will allow everyone to better express with confidence who truly is the Seaver liberal arts graduate. (CFR 2.6)

Because the self study documentation indicates that "more evidence has been gathered in the area of Knowledge and Scholarship, while our efforts to assess Faith and Heritage, and Community and Global Learning have varied across the University," it seemed appropriate to look at those areas to better understand the challenges. The report for the Non-Western cultures area of General Education, for example, shows an effort to do assessment but, as the institution acknowledges, it is not as effective as desired for several reasons. First, the assessment methods for Non-Western included an essay question for direct evidence and, for indirect evidence, a survey of a sample of students. The essay question essentially asks for recall of information on some topic taught in the courses and an explanation of how that knowledge has broadened the student's perspective. The assessment report acknowledges that the question needs to be rewritten for the coming year. Assessment tasks should represent the construct of

the desired outcome and be linked back to the institutional goals. For example, a task such as an analysis of a global issue affecting the US and China, or a comparison of the role of religion in political life in two cultures, might reveal global understanding but not necessarily progress toward the IEO goal: "Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity." In short, close attention to alignment and wording of outcomes is needed to strengthen the assessment activities.

In addition, as the assessment efforts are refined, it is important to give attention to the rubrics used to analyze the level of learning. As noted earlier, embedding assessment in summative assignments is an efficient and effective method for gathering data samples that focus on specific competencies. However, in the case of the Non-Western GE area, the rubric used for assessing the essay appears to be a Writing rubric rather than a rubric on Global Understanding. As the self study references familiarity with materials from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), the faculty may want to look at the organization's VALUE rubric on Intercultural Knowledge and Competence.

In all areas, the team strongly encourages Pepperdine to select carefully the constructs that they wish to measure, give the students assessment activities that are directly related to those constructs, and develop rubrics that are also aligned. Furthermore, all faculty teaching in a particular area are encouraged hold calibration sessions in advance to ensure consistent use of the rubrics. (CFRs 2.2a, 2.6)

The student survey is a good idea in that it involves students in reflecting on their learning, but again the assessment may not be closely enough related to the learning outcome. For example, to assess "valuing diversity," students were asked how confident they would feel discussing one of the topics from the course. This requires a prospective response rather than assessing whether they actually have had conversations about such topics. Self-reporting is a reasonably trustworthy way to gather some

evidence but having confidence about a potential intellectual discussion may be different from "valuing diversity." (CFR 2.5)

Finally, the assessment report summary indicates that the students did learn about non-Western civilization as was expected, and certainly being better informed is the first step. However, the very term non-Western may not convey the affective outcomes of openness to others and valuing others that Pepperdine holds central in its institutional outcomes. (CFR 1.1)

High Impact Practices Assessment

High Impact Practices (HIP) at Pepperdine are of several different types, some of which have begun assessment work and some of which have not. For example, the First Year Seminar has begun assessment, but the team could find only anecdotal evidence in on-site discussions with faculty about assessment work in capstone courses and senior seminars. The team urges rapid introduction and alignment of efforts to measure cumulative and integrative results at the senior seminar and capstone levels. Since capstones are department-specific, common outcomes such as oral and written communication might be selected for assessment by every department. The team believes that Pepperdine needs more direct evidence than it currently possesses. There are many opportunities at this stage to collect direct evidence in creative ways rich in interdisciplinary content using a variety of measures. Assessment rubrics for projects, theses, performances and portfolios are particularly effective once there is faculty agreement on goals and objectives. Refinement of rubrics over time may lead to more nuanced judgments. The team encourages Pepperdine to provide structured opportunities for faculty to have these kinds of discussions.

Pepperdine's narrative directs attention to initial work on the issue of student participation in HIP, which is important because all students may not have equal access to them. Of course, these practices will not affect all students in the same way either, and so-called "high impact" practices as defined by

AAC&U sponsored research are not automatically impactful modes of learning for every student. Moreover, these practices vary widely from institution to institution and require the same care in assessment as any other type of academic or co-curricular practice.

Writing Portfolios

Writing portfolios have the potential to provide useful evidence of the development of writing proficiency. A critically important skill for college graduates, writing proficiency (along with other forms of literacy) is a cross-disciplinary student learning outcome. The Junior Writing Portfolio rubric developed for General Education is a good one. However, there remain drawbacks in the methods of evidence collection, such as complicated instructions for students; inconsistencies in directions; confusion about the acceptable number of pages; arbitrariness of submission of initial assignment instructions; no evidence of inter-rater reliability checks; scant formal planning for improvements, and no formal feedback to students except receipt of a Pass or Fail grade.

At least some of these shortcomings may be due to perceived uncertainty about ownership of the project and about who has authority to implement changes in the way the Junior Writing Portfolio project is further developed. As a mid-point assessment of first-year and second-year writing, it begs for a reflective student essay, teaching interventions, and alignment with work in capstone courses across the curriculum. Which skills need improvement during the time remaining until graduation? How will this be accomplished? The team noted that an electronic Portfolio program offered by OIE is currently being pilot-tested in the GSEP. This may eventually allow for improvements in methodology. On a different level, there should be conceptual discussions in tandem among the writing intensive course instructors regarding the purposes for which the writing samples are being collected, how students are advised, how the contents of portfolios are assembled, how evaluated, and what the implications are for teaching strategies to be subsequently implemented. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

Graduate Programs Assessment and Use of High Impact Practices

Each of the graduate programs is also involved in applying the relevant High Impact Practices for their programs. Their reports show emphasis on improving writing and research capabilities and increasing the emphasis on experiential work aimed at enhancing professional judgment. The self study and individual reports for both undergraduates and graduates show a common theme—students need more guidance and opportunities to reflect in order to fully accomplish the desired learning outcomes.

Each of the schools and colleges has dedicated personnel overseeing assessment and often linked to faculty development and strategic planning. In several cases, graduate programs also have specialized accreditation and thus have a history of assessment, curriculum mapping, and continuous improvement. The reports demonstrate thoughtful work in areas such as ethics and professional responsibility, reflecting fundamental values of Pepperdine, as well as skill areas such as writing and oral communication or specific traits essential for success in the profession. Faculty in Graziadio have used assessment results as the foundation for curricular changes to adapt to a changing external environment. Because professional programs include internships and practicums, faculty found the assessment process encouraged them as a first step to refine their understanding of just what outcomes they expected from the practical experience. As a result faculty were able to prepare students more fully and identify appropriate assignments, before assessing the results. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5)

With little previous experience in assessment, both the SPP and the Law School are taking appropriate steps to develop the assessment process including identifying leadership, attending WASC meetings, introducing faculty to learning outcomes at the course level, and discussing the value of assessment for their students. Their progress reports are candid about faculty resistance and realistic about the challenges as well as the steps to be taken to develop their assessment efforts. As many of the graduate programs rely on a mix of faculty including adjuncts and visiting faculty who are professionals

in the field with little experience with assessment, a similar process is necessary to include them in the conversation about assessment, and help them write learning outcomes, align their courses with the program goals, and participate in analyzing data. Continuing support from deans and OIE will be important to fully establish assessment activities at the level expected.

Conclusion: Student Learning & Assessment

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the team believes that Pepperdine has made considerable progress in this area during the two years since the CPR, although there is still work to be done. The Pepperdine self study (pp.16-22) cites a number of instances where dissatisfaction was expressed by teachers in student demonstrations of writing ability, of critical analysis, and of using sources cited in research. These are the types of core skills which cut across disciplinary boundaries and apply to a wide array of subject matter. A school-wide or division-wide focus on constructs, such as "critical thinking" for example, might prove very productive. This type of collective work is a significant dimension of institutional learning, where focused intentional dialogue and recorded conversations about teaching---apart from the issue of financial resources---are called for. Faculty must be encouraged and incentivized to contribute this critical piece. Closing the loop is perhaps less final, and more substantial, than the University appreciates at this stage. The team encourages this on-going, forward-looking work. (CFRs 2.8, 2.9, 4.6, 4.7)

- **Faculty Engagement**

The CPR team stressed the need to improve University-wide faculty engagement, faculty-administration collaboration, and consensus building in order to develop effective oversight of program quality and student learning across the University. As mentioned previously, the Commission requested

the University "to continue its efforts to engage faculty more fully in the full range of University wide initiatives, to proceed with work on a revised faculty charter, and to create a risk-free climate that encourages open communication." The Commission expected the University to demonstrate "evidence of the success of these efforts" by the time of the EER visit.

Pepperdine demonstrated deliberate progress on faculty engagement and improving the relations between faculty and administration. The self study is laudably candid about examining this important and challenging issue. As indicated in Essay 2 (pp. 34-35), the University has taken numerous steps to understand and improve faculty engagement in shared governance. In the areas of assessment and program review, as noted in other sections of this report, faculty have stepped up ownership and responsibility for evaluating the quality of student learning and the quality of their programs. On a university-wide level, the ASLC is a model of effective faculty leadership and effective collaboration between faculty and administration. It has demonstrated success in engaging faculty peers in the assessment and program review processes. In on-site discussions and follow-up written comments submitted to team members, ASLC members report great satisfaction in having a common language to talk with other faculty. Their assessment efforts have yielded rich conversations and opportunities to exchange across programs and disciplines. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7, 3.4, 4.5, 4.6).

The UAC—the body charged with oversight of policies, procedures, standards and approvals for academic programs—has strengthened faculty ownership and responsibility for academic quality. It has restricted voting authority exclusively to its faculty members and instituted evidence requirements for academic proposals submitted to that body. Faculty generally cited this as a sign of improved faculty governance. UAC members reported that the quality of their dialogue has changed significantly in the past year: they ask harder questions of proposals and engage in deeper dialogue about the purpose, rationale and mission-fit of program proposals. The council has returned proposals which have not

included assessment evidence or program review results. At the same time, a recent Substantive Change proposal for a new program modality was sent for WASC review without prior UAC review and approval. The UAC expected to review it after WASC approval, while other faculty cited this as "another" example of decisions being made outside of formal structures and then brought to the formal bodies for information and review "after the fact." The team encourages the UAC to continue its progress in clarifying and exercising faculty leadership and oversight of academic quality. (CFRs 2.4, 3.11, 4.4, 4.6)

The self study and conversations with faculty and administration commonly identified other signs of improved faculty-administration relations: University-wide committees have adopted charters to clarify purpose, authority (including the role of faculty), and scope of duties, and this has included strengthening the faculty role in choosing faculty representation; all university-wide committees now publish their proceedings on the University intranet to increase transparency; faculty in Seaver College have worked with their dean and the provost over the past year to resolve a list of issues regarding promotion and tenure processes; and the president and provost have instituted practices to engage with faculty more frequently.

The University Faculty Council (UFC)—a body designed to enhance communication and consultation between faculty from the five schools and University administration—has begun holding faculty-only executive sessions prior to its meetings with the provost and president. The UFC held its first faculty-only retreat in February 2011, which the faculty members uniformly described as a breakthrough for trust-building among faculty across schools. The report from the retreat identifies challenges and recommendations for faculty engagement at Pepperdine. The UFC tasked itself with creating a University-wide definition of "faculty" as a starting point for addressing faculty roles, rights, and responsibilities. The team encourages the UFC to make progress on this project and on other issues

identified in the 2011 report, including revision of its charter and addressing findings from the most recent OIE faculty survey (discussed below). (CFRs 1.3, 3.11)

To assess the status of faculty governance and institutional decision-making for the EER Report, the OIE conducted a faculty survey and prepared a research brief. This survey provided Pepperdine with useful information to assess its own progress and compare itself to national and international norms (CFR 4.5). While the overall response rate to the survey was quite low (27%), especially compared with their benchmark response rate of 53%, and there was significant variation in response rates between the five schools (from 11% to 44%), the survey findings echo team discussions with various faculty groups on campus.

According to the survey, a significant majority of respondents consider University-wide faculty governance as "relatively inactive and inoperable" and "exercised outside of formal structures and… based on informal processes and interpersonal relationships" (OIE Research Brief, 2012, p. 5). OIE's summary of qualitative responses identifies the most prevalent obstacles to shared governance as: lack of transparency in administrative processes, a disconnection between faculty and administration, and a lack of trust for and sense of being valued by administration (p. 6). Faculty report low influence even in academic areas, such as educational policy, evaluation of academic quality, and standards for promotion and tenure, rating them low in comparison to the benchmark study (pp. 5-6).

Similar points are made in the UFC report. It emphasizes the difficulty of working across the five schools on University-wide issues, raises the question of whether decisions are "made within the structure of University committees " or through other kinds of relationships, and claims that "[t]he committee structures in place allow faculty to participate in the exchange of university information, but seem ill-structured to provide influence" (UFC Report, p. 2). The UFC Report concludes (p.1) that it "will take both a paradigm and climate shift for [faculty academic leadership at the University level] to

be achieved in real behavior. The structure is developing or in place (University committees, comment and review periods, etc.), but the nature of the interaction still does not lead to measurable engagement."

During the site visit, faculty and administrators acknowledged that trust had improved and that more trust still needed to be developed. Faculty described "tremendous progress" in faculty engagement and governance across the past two years while acknowledging "still a long way to go." An improved climate between faculty and administration was palpable to the team and mentioned in every faculty discussion. Also reported thematically, especially in comments received in the confidential email account and in written comments submitted on-site rather than in open discussions, were continuing fears about: speaking out publicly (fear of marginalization or charges of disloyalty); a prevailing culture of politeness that discourages agreement and open discussion about difficult issues; a lack of clarity regarding policies governing maternity or medical leaves that encourage the practice of "everyone for themselves" in negotiating leaves; and frustrations about not being heard or consulted on decisions that affect the quality of faculty work life and the quality of education.   Hence, while the University has demonstrated progress on the Commission's recommendation on "to create a risk-free climate that encourages open communication," it is encouraged to continue its efforts in this regard. (CFR 3.11)

Both the structures for shared governance in general and faculty's sense of influence in decision-making still need considerable development. Faculty still report the lack of genuine influence and decision-making power of committees, and faculty's sense of influence varies among the schools. There also persists a diminished sense of faculty agency, which was visible repeatedly when team members inquired about the ways they might take initiative to remedy a variety of issues raised in conversations. The institution has been slow to make progress on its own 2010 CPR self study (p.26) recommendation to "Clearly articulate our collaborative governance approach."   An ad hoc committee was convened only in the spring of 2012 to address the creation of a vision statement on shared governance at

Pepperdine and has drafted a provisional document, which, at the time of this report, has not yet been released.   As well, the institution has not met the Commission's expectation that it revise its faculty charter. As one faculty summarized the progress, "faculty-admin relations are improved but uncertain. Spirit is willing (maybe), but structures are weak. We need both a culture and a structure of transparency and open/free disagreement." (CFRs 3.8, 3.11)

Conclusion: Faculty Engagement

While Pepperdine has made strides, more work is needed in this area. The team recommends that the University continue to self-assess progress on shared governance and use the results for improving trust between faculty and administration, for strengthening faculty academic leadership, and for expanding the influence of faculty voices in academic decision-making. Improving the climate is a shared responsibility among all community members, which entails significant initiative-taking by all constituencies. The team encourages the Pepperdine community to move forward with haste on creating a vision and concrete plan for shared governance at Pepperdine.

- **Evidence-Based Decision-Making**

Evidence Gathering Throughout the University

Since the CPR visit, Pepperdine has expanded the work being done by OIE. The five staff members have specialties that align with both internal and external reporting needs. The University has a great deal of data of many different types, and in order to develop a sustainable process, it will be important for the OIE to work collaboratively with University units to determine the essential data set to be maintained over time. Much of the recent work of OIE has been tied to the WASC site visit and in the coming months it will be important for them to determine a sustainable level of work for their office and then prioritize the many requests for data, analysis, assistance, and support that they receive. (CFR 4.5)

As indicated by the OIE document, Pepperdine staff and faculty now have a significant set of basic data about students to support decision making. The broad categories include enrollment and retention data, indirect measures associated with student success (national surveys of various types), academic major measures (created by the academic departments), and GE program measures. These are available electronically in reports generated from the University's data base and the *Pepperdine Fact Book*, and in other specialized reports. Faculty and staff are appreciative of the quality of data and the support in the use of data that they are receiving from the OIE and are interested in acquiring additional specialized data (CFRs 4.4, 4.5).

OIE also creates and publishes data for planning as well as for a number of external audiences (IPEDS, US News, etc.). Much of the external data can be seen in Pepperdine's *Common Data Set*. These data as well as some password protected data can be seen in the *Data Warehouse* on the OIE website and in other reports generated by OIE (CFR 4.5).

Academic Programs

Academic programs make use of data in a variety of ways, as described previously in the section on Student Learning and Assessment. OIE is responsible for maintaining the *Program Review Guidebook*, and providing training and support for faculty in assessment and data analysis. The OIE also provides a central repository for assessment data as well as being a resource for institutional data that are of use in Program Review (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 2.7)

The Co-Curriculum

Co-curricular assessment at Pepperdine has moved away from using the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards as their sole measure of success to developing their own learning outcomes for their programs. An examination of the co-curricular

program review documents available on the OIE website indicates that this transformation is in its early stages and thus the data to go with these new learning outcomes are in the process of being defined and gathered (CFRs 4.5, 4.6).

Diversity

The desire to increase diversity in all segments of the Pepperdine population (faculty, staff and students) has featured prominently in both the CPR and EER self studies. One of the University's five strategic goals is "Goal 4 – Increase institutional diversity consistent with our mission." Based on the details provided in the document *Pepperdine 2020: Boundless Horizons*, one portion of this goal is to increase the diverse population at Pepperdine while the balance of the goal is focused on preparing students to serve and study in other cultures and contexts. The OIE is currently working with the Goal 4 Working Group to finalize a set of metrics (demographic characteristics, HERI College Senior Survey results, and other disaggregated data) that will be used to measure progress on this goal. What remains to be done is to create a specific action plan for the advancement of this goal, to narrow the list of indicators, and set targets for these indicators (CFRs 1.5, 4.3, 4.6).

Since the CPR visit, Pepperdine has gathered data on demographics, expanded its efforts to recruit a diverse student body, and backed a number of groups targeted at supporting a diverse population. Reports from the University Diversity Committee (UDC) list a collection of actions taken to increase student diversity. These include further work with the Posse Foundation, engagement with local community colleges, recruiting at diversity-related events, and adjusting marketing materials to better reflect Pepperdine's commitment to diversity. Conversations with members of the UDC indicated that some confusion exists over how data are disseminated and how action gets taken. As one member stated, the "space is too wide" between data and action. (CFRs 2.10, 1.5)

The UDC report contains examples of changes that have been made to faculty recruitment processes to expand the hiring pool to include diverse candidates. Discussions with faculty members, administrators, and the UDC indicate that Pepperdine has made some progress in diversifying the faculty; however, it needs to continue to give this effort special attention in order to fulfill its responsibility (among other things) to provide adequate mentoring and support for an increasingly diverse student body. While Opportunity Hires appear to have been helpful, care should be given to insure that new faculty have access to appropriate mentoring so that they are successfully integrated into the University. GSEP has seen particular success and some of their practices may be helpful in the recruiting efforts of other schools (CFR 3.2).

Pepperdine's EER report acknowledges the CPR visiting team's recommendation that the institution "…recognize openly the importance of campus climate…" and lists some steps that have been taken to seek improvements, including the Building Bridges initiative (an on-campus group for gay and straight students, staff and faculty members) and various co-curricular efforts; however, no evidence (or analysis thereof) was provided on the success of these efforts to date. As happened during the CPR visit, the team received comments from a number of individuals (faculty, staff, and students) expressing concerns about a lack of hospitality experienced by some members of its diverse community. Examples of a lack of hospitality included: faculty members' posting unwelcoming items on their doors; faculty and students failing on occasion to call out hurtful comments and slurs uttered in classrooms; and some in the community equating sexual orientation with sexual behavior. From the comments it appears that some individuals have a continuing fear about speaking out about these matters. The team strongly encourages Pepperdine to redouble its efforts to address these concerns.

The team sensed that the University has struggled somewhat with a number of issues related to diversity. The consensus that emerged in the team is that it is critical for Pepperdine to clearly define

what it means by its strategic goal to "increase diversity consistent with university mission," and then to communicate that understanding to the University community as well as to prospective students, faculty, and staff. (CFRs 4.5, 4.6).

Strategic Planning

It appears that there was wide institutional involvement in the development of Pepperdine's strategic plan. The information provided for the EER visit was a continuation of what was provided for the CPR visit. The process was built on a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis that was done in 2006 and the resultant work to make meaning from those data. Additional information was gathered by eight study groups over a year long period. At the time of the CPR, a draft of the strategic plan entitled *Strategic Plan 2012* was in circulation. The final version of the plan, *Pepperdine 2020: Boundless Horizons*, was adopted by the Board of Regents in June, 2011. The plan has five main goals:

- Advance student learning and superior scholarship.
- Strengthen our commitment to the faith mission of the university.
- Build meaningful community and enduring alumni loyalty.
- Increase institutional diversity consistent with mission.
- Develop resources that support the aspiration to be a premier, global Christian university.

These themes seem to be widely embraced and deeply consistent with the university's understanding of its mission (CFR 4.1).

There is, however, surprisingly little in this strategic plan that appears to address the national conversation about the future of higher education, the new opportunities and challenges that may lie ahead, and the potential need for universities to have to adapt rapidly to a changing higher education market place. For example, there is little in the plan that addresses the use of technology in higher

education; however, this appears to be an area in which Pepperdine is beginning to work. The Chief

Information Officer (CIO) and his team provide training, the classrooms are well equipped, and there are

a number of experiments underway with the use of technology in the traditional classroom as well as the

development of an online MBA in GSBM, while GSEP already offers both distance education (85

percent online) and blended (40 percent online) master's programs. It will be important for some of the

UPC's own conversations about the changing context of higher education to be reflected in specific

actions steps such as the one initiated by the CIO (CFR 4.1, 4.2).

Pepperdine has intentionally taken an "organic" approach to the development of actions steps for

the strategic plan. Individual schools and other University units (e.g. Library, Student Affairs) have

written or are writing their own strategic plans which align with the University's strategic plan. That

alignment was clearly evident in the sample plans viewed by the visiting teams. The OIE is in the

process of developing an alignment matrix to display the wide variety of work being done across the

campus to support the goals. University units create annual reports which are received by the vice

president over the particular unit. Some of these reports have already been reshaped to talk about their

units' progress in terms of the five strategic goals. It will be important for there to be a single individual

or office which receives all of these reports so that overall institutional progress on advancing the goals

can be aggregated for the UPC on a regular schedule. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2)

The University is in the process of creating metrics and benchmarks for each strategic goal (at

the University level and at the unit level). The OIE is currently working with a number of groups on

campus to discuss available data and how those data might assist in the monitoring of progress on the

goals. Five faculty/staff working groups were created to develop metrics for each of the given

University strategic goals. These working groups will also participate in setting benchmarks for these

goals and recommending initiatives that could help advance the goal. Individual schools and units have

the OIE available to them to help set metrics for their individual strategic plans, and in some cases these metrics overlap with the ones being used by the working groups for the five goals. The UPC is responsible for monitoring the metrics for the University strategic plan as well as the individual school and unit plans (CFR 4.4).

Pepperdine is to be commended for the excellent progress made in developing a strategic plan that is widely embraced by the community. It is clear that even though many of the details of the plan have not yet been finalized, it is already in use for decision making. It will be important for the institution to finish the development of the plan (metrics, targets, action steps and responsible persons) and to clearly articulate how the information from a wide variety of unit reports will be aggregated for the UPC.

Process for Connecting Evidence with Budgeting

The vehicle used to connect evidence-based decision making with the budget is the UPC. Its membership includes the president, the vice presidents, the provost, the vice provost, the deans of the five schools, the dean of libraries, three faculty representatives, and other executives who manage key areas such as athletics. The UPC is responsible for three key functions:

- Articulating and monitoring University-level strategic initiatives
- Reviewing the findings of academic and co-curricular program reviews
- Overseeing the development of the annual budget

This group works through multiple levels of review and analysis in the process of constructing a budget (CFR 4.2).

The UPC meets regularly and discusses a wide range of topics critical to the health and well-being of the university. UPC members see effectiveness information from a number of different areas of the University (including program review summaries). It is this shared information and the strategic

plan that form the basis for budget development. The academic areas of the University meet with the

provost to develop their budget requests; the non-academic areas meet with the appropriate senior

administrator to review their budget requests. The revenue budget is developed by the Chief Financial

Officer in consultation with the deans and provost as well as the staff members engaged with asset

management and fundraising. Both revenue and expense information is presented to the full UPC and

then a subcommittee of the UPC meets to prepare a draft of the budget for review by the president. The

president and the UPC finalize the budget together and this budget is presented to the Board of Regents

for approval (CFRs 4.2, 4.3).

Conclusion: Evidence Based Decision Making

Pepperdine has made significant progress since the CPR visit in its capacity to gather, analyze,

and use information for decision making. This has involved many dedicated individuals in a significant

effort. The team encourages OIE to determine a sustainable level of work for the office and then to

prioritize the many requests for data, analysis, assistance, and support that it receives. The framing goals

of the strategic plan *Pepperdine 2020* have been widely embraced across the campus and are already

being used in institutional decision making and budgeting. Benchmarks are being finalized for

measuring progress. As the University works to refine and carry out this plan, the team believes it will

be important for the institution to reflect on how the changing landscape in higher education may affect

Pepperdine and to clarify the understanding of "diversity consistent with mission."

B. Additional Comments Regarding the Four Standards

Issues relating to Pepperdine's compliance with the four WASC Standards have already been

discussed in the team's responses to the three essays contained in the EER report. This section contains

some additional observations by the visiting team, not previously fully addressed.

- **Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives, and Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

Institutional Purposes

Pepperdine is clear about the twofold nature of its institutional aims which is identified in the University's published mission statement as a commitment to both "academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service and leadership." As evidenced by its EER self study, supporting documentation and website, the University's operational policies and procedures are appropriate for its status as an independent, medium-sized university and directly relate to its educational mission. Its EER offers evidence of significant progress in establishing and monitoring learning objectives across the five colleges and schools as outlined earlier in this report. Pepperdine has enjoyed considerable stability in its senior administrative team and has distributed responsibility among deans and associate deans across the various schools and colleges. The University's governing structure ensures autonomy in establishing educational programs, objectives and policies. The team noted what seemed to be a large number of administrators for an institution of Pepperdine's size. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6)

Integrity

As part of its 75th anniversary celebrations, the University has reaffirmed the vision set out by founder George Pepperdine that the school might be a place where students of all backgrounds could study, while continuing its emphasis on religious education and the development of Christian character. Pepperdine maintains clear and available statements of academic freedom for faculty and students in places such as the faculty handbook and information distributed to new students. As noted elsewhere in this report, the University has established a variety of initiatives to create and support a diverse learning community consistent with the mission and values of the University and the changing nature of society.

While the team received some negative comments about the environment (e.g., indicating that the climate for LGBT people is not welcoming, or that students from Protestant backgrounds were hired in some student positions while non-Protestant students were not), most of the faculty, staff and students met on-site affirmed the University community as caring and nurturing, and pointed to initiatives such as Building Bridges and the Diversity Councils as evidence of progress and aspiration. (CFR 1.4, 1.5)

Pepperdine's academic policies, catalogs, and handbooks are available via its website. A review of the University's marketing and recruitment materials revealed nothing incorrect or misleading. The University maintains Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) for Seaver College and the graduate and professional schools. All research involving human subjects must be approved by one of the IRBs and meet federal and professional standards. The website confirms the availability of policies governing student services and matters such as refunds, academic integrity, etc. As part of its efforts to increase assessment of both curricular and co-curricular matters, the University has established assessment cycles for a variety of student services including the Seaver College Career Center, Student-Led Ministries, and Campus Recreation. (CFRs 1.7, 1.8, 2.12, 2.14)

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

Fiscal Resources

As of this report, the financial position of Pepperdine is strong. The endowment is large given the size and mission of the University. The promised completion of the capital campaign within the next three years simply reinforces this view. Moreover, in general, the physical and fiscal resources of the University are strong, and the tracking, monitoring, and accounting are sophisticated. Positive balances are reported on both the operating and capital budgets. Margins are carefully monitored program-by-program and sufficient warning systems are in place to alert action should any of those margins turn

negative. The plant throughout is relatively new and major renovations and additions are not anticipated at this time that are not already budgeted. The staffs that create, plan, and manage budgets, raise and invest money are sophisticated and mature.

This is a positive picture. Yet the coming convergence, indeed, the economic factors that are already here, threatening all of higher education, are beginning to be felt at Pepperdine. While government dollars are available, students are leaving the University with very high debt loads that concern the president. Increases in the cost-of-living for faculty and staff of the University, not to mention increasing medical costs, do not show signs of abating. The necessary overlay of technology on the institution is a cost only guessed at 5 and 10 years ago. Now, higher education seems to understand that those costs are multiplicative if not exponential. The University has been fortunate in the gifts that have come its way in the last 75 years, and this administration has been vigorous in seeking gift funding to build the institution and to supplant tuition for student aid. The University must surely wonder if this rate of support can be maintained.

Pepperdine's situation is not unique. These issues, and others, are being confronted by colleges and universities across the country. This University, however, has enjoyed a level of support, level of expenditure, that is generous, historically. The new economy of higher education may bring new and unstable problems to the institution. McLuhan said we drive into the future by looking into the rear-view mirror. Past behavior, past practice may not be sufficient to guide Pepperdine successfully into this new reality. (CFR 3.5)

Governance

Pepperdine has all the signs of meeting standards for adequate governance and control as modeled by national organizations such as the Association of Governing Boards (AGB)—the ideal perhaps for higher education. The University has bylaws that were amended and restated in 2006. The

responsibilities and structures of the board of regents are described therein. The document clearly places fiduciary responsibility for the University in the board. The bylaws delegate these responsibilities and authorities to the president, though subject to the control of the board.

Recent times have seen growing interest in the way boards fulfill their responsibilities and exercise control of the University. Attention especially is drawn to how CEOs are selected, evaluated, and compensated. Pepperdine may want to take a look at how these increased, if not new, authorities and responsibilities are being articulated and directed by national organizations such as AGB and WASC in the "Policy for Independent Governing Boards". The Pepperdine bylaws address the issue of conflict of interest, though the language is general, and the University may want to use the language of conflict of interest. (CFR 3.9)

- **Standard 4**

Sustainability

Pepperdine's response in just two years to the CPR visiting team and WASC Commission recommendations, particularly its development of a significant process for assessing students' learning, has been remarkable. Program review, measurements of quality, inter-institutional comparisons, rubrics, and increased faculty involvement in these processes have been achieved in a very short time. To some degree, the reported fatigue in the faculty and staff may reflect this rapid and full commitment to meeting the recommendations made following the CPR process.

The next goal for Pepperdine is to assure the institutionalization of these processes so that they are on-going and not one-time events. When the Commission has acted on this report, it will be critical that the institution have in place those instruments, persons, and decisions that will assure the process of assessment be fundamental to the educational operations. While the pressure for assessment from the

various accrediting bodies will continue, a commitment to the quality of assessment must come from within the institution and be endemic to the academic program itself. Further work in defining and refining outcomes as well as better alignment of learning activities and rubrics with their specified outcomes should help produce better data and reduce the perceived load of assessment. (CFRs 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

C. Student Success

Pepperdine has made progress since the CPR visit in the disaggregation of student success data. OIE has implemented an annual cycle of reporting to help programs see their retention and graduation rates and in the near future it is expected that these reports will be automated and customizable so that academic leaders can view the data in real time (CFRs 2.10, 4.5).

OIE data for three recent cohorts (see below) indicate that the undergraduate retention and six-year graduation rates in Seaver are generally strong, with the typical difference between female and male graduation rates. Baseline first time freshman headcounts for each of these cohorts were in the range 703 to 758. In reviewing Exhibit D-1 in the EER report, which further disaggregates data based on both gender and ethnicity, it appears that non-resident alien males are experiencing some challenges (consistent 6-year graduation rates below 70%). National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) comparator data have six-year graduation rates disaggregated by ethnicity which appear to confirm Pepperdine's overall strength but also point to the need to investigate further what is occurring with non-resident aliens; however, the NCES data are for one year only and are likely to be volatile given the small number of comparison schools.

Pepperdine has formed the Seaver Student Success Alliance which is an administrative committee dedicated to studying student success data and making recommendations for better tracking and intervention. This is a positive step with potential to further strengthen graduation rates, especially

among at-risk student groups. Some further analysis of the non-resident alien data has led to the

creation of a mentoring program for first semester international students which provides each student

with two mentors, one an international student who has been successful at Pepperdine and the other an

American student (CFRs 2.10, 4.4).

Seaver 6 Year Graduation Rates by Gender for 2004, 2005, 2006 Cohorts

	2004	*2005*	*2006*
Male	74%	70%	79%
Female	86%	74%	80%

Seaver 6 Year Graduation Rates by Ethnicity for 2004, 2005, 2006 Cohorts

	2004	*2005*	*2006*
White, Non-Hispanic	82%	75%	81%
Black or African American	88%	51%	68%
Native Hispanic or Latino	77%	75%	87%
Asian	83%	68%	76%
American Indian or Alaska	92%	80%	80%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	65%	75%	75%
Non Resident Alien	67%	66%	75%
Two or More Races	100%	100%	100%
Unknown	85%	72%	75%

Source (both charts): OIE "Strategic Plan Enrollment and Retention Tables" retrieved from
http://services.pepperdine.edu/oie/data-warehouse/strategic-plan.aspx

Three-year graduation data for master's programs (cohorts entering in fall 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008) were presented in Exhibit G in the EER report. The baseline student headcounts for each of these cohorts were in the range 831-899. The team's review of the data indicates that while overall graduation rates are strong (percentages for the most part ranging from the low 70s to the high 90s), there are somewhat lower graduation rates for African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students, particularly when compared to NCES data. In some years none graduated, although in other years as many as 100 percent did. However for both the American Indian/Alaska Native and the Hawaiian/Pacific Islander groups, the population of these students at Pepperdine is so small that variations are to be expected; these alone could explain the lower graduation rates. The African-American student data merit further study.

The University has disaggregated the data by grouping master's degree programs into categories: Arts and Humanities (a very small group), Business, Education, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and Other. Looking at this breakdown, and taking into account the small population size in some categories, the progress of African-American students in Graziadio could use further study. Hispanic men are also not performing at the same rate as other master's students in the social and behavioral science. While both of these populations are not large, they are of sufficient size to evaluate whether these differences have some explanation beyond normal statistical variation (CFRs 2.10, 4.4).

Based on the data, the overall completion rate for JD students is good (85 percent or more in five years); however African-American and Hispanic students are not achieving the same rate of success in the JD program as students of other ethnic backgrounds. As the result of looking at these data, the School of Law conducted a study on the success of African-American students. Based on the findings from this study, the School of Law just recently hired a full-time director of the Academic Success Program which provides orientation, skills workshops, supplemental tutoring and bar exam preparation.

The most recent cohort for which data are available (2006) shows better outcomes for African-American and Hispanic students (82 percent or more in five years) and hopefully the addition of this key staff member will further enhance their success. (CFRs 2.10, 2.13, 4.4).

The EdD Program has lower graduation rates (close to 50 percent in seven years) than other graduate programs at Pepperdine. The analysis by GSEP indicates that students are completing their degrees later than expected, and that it is the dissertation writing that has slowed down the process. Additional supports for writing and research have been put in place. The PsyD program has strong graduation rates (generally exceeding 70 percent in seven years) but students of color are taking longer to complete their degree (CFRs 2.10, 2.13, 4.4).

Pepperdine has done a good job of disaggregating its data and has in several instances made meaning from the data. Moving forward it will be important for Pepperdine to set targets for retention and graduation rates and to use those targets when looking at comparator and aspirant data, and to continue to deepen its work to understand the factors that contribute to the success rates among various populations (CFR 4.3).

The UDC also has significant interest in making meaning from data including data on student success. UDC members are enthusiastic about the university-wide multifaceted focus on diversity provided by Goal 4 of the strategic plan and see this as an indication that "aspiration is in the heart of the community." Still, there seems to be some uncertainty about who is ultimately responsible for leadership in this area, whether adequate resources will be made available, and what kinds of accountability structures are or will be put in place. There appears to be uncertainty about how the UDC can influence curriculum and budget decisions. The UDC along with the various college organizations focused on student success will be a critical part of advancing goal 4 and supporting the institution-wide

conversation about increasing the diversity of Pepperdine on many different dimensions (CFRs 2.10, 4.3, 4.4).

II FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY & PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

The team found that Pepperdine has used the time between the CPR and EER to make significant progress in a number of important areas, and believes that the commendations (below) are well deserved. In addition to specific recommendations for further improvement internally, the team also urges the University to pay careful attention to the external environment in which it functions (especially the economic environment) and prepare – perhaps more than it has done to date -- to meet the challenges posed by the extraordinarily rapid changes that are underway.

Commendations

1   Pepperdine has developed a strategic plan for the University, which is being used for decision-making even while details are still being worked upon.

2   In two years or less, Pepperdine has rapidly developed structures for assessment that can be used to carry the University forward.

3   Pepperdine has created the Office for Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), an extraordinary resource for ongoing organizational learning.

4   Pepperdine has created the Advancement of Student Learning Council (ASLC) which has done important work in developing/implementing assessment and program review processes at the University level. ASLC provides a good model of faculty providing leadership while working collaboratively with administration in support of institutional learning.

5   Pepperdine has developed an improved program review handbook with University-wide implementation and emerging consistency across the schools.

6   Although more remains to be done, Pepperdine has made progress in addressing issues relating to diversity, e.g., by creating diversity councils at the University level and in some schools; and advancing the case for women. Seeking to "increase institutional diversity consistent with our mission" has been elevated to the status of a strategic goal for the University.

7   Throughout the University, interviewees showed candor and honesty, demonstrating seriousness of purpose and a willingness to engage in organizational learning.

8   Although there is still a long way to go, Pepperdine has developed a sense of improved trust between faculty and administration.

9   Pepperdine's administration has provided leadership and support for institutional change since the CPR.

10 Pepperdine's students are full of praise for the faculty and their level of caring. They appreciate the small classes and the services provided by (in particular) the Counseling Center and the Disability Center.

11 Pepperdine's staff expressed great enthusiasm for the University. They are proud to be part of the "Wave."

Recommendations

The team recommends that Pepperdine:

1   Continue progress toward a fully integrated and implemented strategic plan. (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

2   Develop a deeper understanding of the character and quality of students' learning at Pepperdine. (CFRs 2.5, 2.10, 2.11, 4.6, 4.7)

3   Continue to develop its assessment efforts by such means as:

a   Using more/varied forms of direct evidence of learning;

b   Defining and refining outcomes;

c   Working to better align learning activities and rubrics with those outcomes.

(CFRs 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 4.4, 4.6)

4   Assure student involvement in the various forms of assessment that the University is pursuing. (CFRs 2.5, 4.8)

5   Do more to clarify faculty roles, to provide structures for various faculty to work together more productively, and to improve the sense of trust - by faculty of administration, and by administration of faculty. (CFRs 3.8, 3.11, 4.1, 4.6, 4.7)

6   Move with haste to develop a vision and a plan for shared governance, as appropriate to its culture. (CFR 3.8)

7   Strengthen its efforts to achieve "community and global understanding" by ensuring that attention to diversity is threaded through academic programs, co-curricular experiences, faculty/staff hiring, communications, and other facets of the life of the University, while also clarifying the understanding of "diversity consistent with mission." (CFR 1.5)

8   Give greater emphasis to the co-curricular experience as a contributor to student learning. (CFR 2.11)

APPENDICES

Index of Acronyms

Advancement of Student Learning Council	ASLC
American Association of Colleges & Universities	AAC&U
Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business	AACSB
Association of Governing Boards	AGB
Capacity and Preparatory Review	CPR
Council for the Advancement of Standards	CAS
Criteria for Review	CFRs
Educational Effectiveness Review	EER
Graduate School of Education and Psychology	GSEP
Graziadio School of Business and Management	Graziadio
High Impact Practices	HIP
Higher Education Research Institute	HERI
Institutional Educational Objective	IEO
Institutional Review Board	IRB
Memorandum of Understanding	MOU
National Center for Education Statistics	NCES
Office of Institutional Effectiveness	OIE
Program Learning Outcome	PLO
School of Public Policy	SPP
Seaver Academic Council	SAC
Seaver Advancement of Learning Team	SALT
Seaver Student Success Alliance	SSSA

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats   SWOT

Student Learning Outcome   SLO

University Faculty Council   UFC

University Tenure Committee   UTC

University Academic Council   UAC

University Diversity Council   UDC

University Planning Committee   UPC

Material Reviewed	Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)	Verified Yes/No
Policy on credit hour	Does this policy adhere to WASC policy and federal regulations?	YES
	Comments: Recommend updating policy to detail how the credit hour policy will be applied to the new online courses in order to more closely comply with federal and WASC standards. What will be the "institutionally established equivalency" of student work for online courses?	
Process(es)/ periodic review	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)?	YES
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	YES
	Comments: Written policy verified in conversation with the Registrar. There are multiple checkpoints for verification beginning at the division level, in the new course approval process and in program reviews. In addition, the Registrar's office reported that samplings are done each semester with follow-up for any anomalies (e.g., hybrid courses). This last check should be incorporated into the written policy as well.	

Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?	YES
	Comments: Published course schedules across the schools vary in degree of information provided. For example, Seaver College includes not only schedule of meeting times but direct instructional hours while GSEP offers only basic course information. Recommend standardizing the way course schedules are published.	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? - **hybrid** How many syllabi were reviewed? - **5** What degree level(s)? - **grad** What discipline(s)? - **Business**	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	YES
	Comments: Syllabi indicate direct instructional hours as per policy and assignments seem appropriate to meet standards.	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that	What kinds of courses? - **Internship, Practicum, Student Teaching, Honors thesis, Applied Research, Directed Studies** How many syllabi were reviewed? - **10**	

do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)	What degree level(s)? - **Undergrad and grad** What discipline(s)? **political science, education, science, art, film, business**	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	YES
	Comments: : **Syllabi indicate expectations in terms of hours to be spent in internships, student teaching, etc.**	