The WASC Institutional Proposal

Due Dates: May 15th (spring reviews) or October 15th (fall reviews)

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSAL

Instructions:

• This WASC Institutional Proposal template follows the Proposal Guidelines found in the WASC Handbook of Accreditation. Please address each section. As you move through the template adding information, please take care not to delete the original questions.

• To create and submit your document, follow the detailed instructions found in the Guide to Submitting Your WASC Institutional Proposal, attached below.

• Attachments are preferred as .PDF. Microsoft Office documents should be saved in versions compatible with Office 97-2003. Office 2007 / Windows Vista documents are not acceptable at this time.

• Use the following naming convention for your report: INSTITUTION NAME: Institutional Proposal (TERM, YEAR) (for example, Pacific University: Institutional Proposal (Spring 2009).

• When complete, choose 'Submit for Review' and 'Submit' the report via LiveText to both the <PRCAdmin> user name as well as your WASC staff liaison. Please call the WASC office at 510-748-9001 if you are unsure who your staff liaison is.

• We strongly recommend that you provide a draft of your Proposal to your WASC staff liaison for review before submitting the final version.

Additional Resources:

For assistance formatting LiveText submissions please contact LiveText technical support or...
review the LiveText Tutorial.

Attachments ➜ Guide_to_Submitting_your_WASC_Institutional_Proposal.pdf

Introduction

Purposes

The Institutional Proposal is the first stage in the accreditation review cycle and guides the entire accreditation review process. It establishes a framework for connecting each institution’s context and priorities with the Standards of Accreditation for the accreditation review cycle. Once accepted, the Proposal serves as the primary basis for both institutional self-review and team evaluation, and is given to each evaluation team and the Commission, along with the Accreditation Standards, as the basis upon which the evaluation of the institution should occur.

The Proposal plays a key role in the accreditation process, by enabling the institution to:

1. Establish the context for its accreditation review cycle;
2. Conduct a preliminary evaluation of itself under the Standards of Accreditation to identify areas of needed improvement;
3. Link its self-review under the Standards with defined outcomes for the accreditation review;
4. Identify the key issues of Institutional Capacity to be addressed in the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR);
5. Develop strategies for assessing and improving student and organizational learning in the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER);
6. Identify for both stages of review (CPR and EER) such necessary components as researchable questions, key indicators of performance, evidence to be collected and used in the process, committees or groups to be involved, and the resources needed as components of a workplan for the review cycle;
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of its data gathering and analysis systems; and
8. Develop a portfolio of data tables and institutional evidence that can serve the institution throughout and beyond the review process.

Timing

The Proposal is submitted 2 years prior to the CPR in order to be finalized 18 months prior to the CPR. The date of its submission is set by the Commission.

Format and Required Elements

The Proposal represents a plan of work that should be framed as a single interconnected process for the two stage review. Considerable thought needs to be given to what the institution intends to accomplish through the entire review process, and how different institutional constituencies will be engaged in developing, approving and implementing the Proposal and during the later phases of the CPR and EER. The Proposal process is designed to enable institutions to adapt the accreditation review to their context and accreditation history with WASC, and demonstrate their response to the Standards of Accreditation through the particular approach developed in the Proposal. Based on the experience of institutions that have most successfully implemented the three-stage process, the accreditation review process can lead to significant institutional engagement and improvement on important issues, especially relating to educational effectiveness. The Proposal process also allows for an institution to align activities undertaken for its accreditation review to its strategic plan or focus on key areas of improvement.

In the design of the Proposal, institutions are encouraged to 1) be creative; 2) build on processes already in place; 3) focus on a limited number of issues that can be addressed in depth; 4) critique and refine the analysis and use of evidence collected by the institution; and 5) significantly increase the institution’s attention to student learning.

The Commission staff has developed a set of materials to support the Proposal process, and these are occasionally updated or revised. Check the WASC website, www.wsscsenior.org/institutionalproposal for the latest versions of these materials.

The Proposal should be organized into four (4) sections:

A. Setting the Institution’s Context and Relating the Proposal to the Standards
B. Framing the Review Process to Connect the Capacity and Educational Effectiveness Reviews
C. Demonstrating a Feasible Plan of Work and Engagement of Key Constituencies
D. Presenting Appendices Connected to the Proposal
Within this framework, all institutional Proposals are to include the elements that follow.

A. Setting the Institution’s Context and Relating the Proposal to the Standards

1. Institutional Context Statement

This key section of the Proposal lays the foundation for why a particular set of issues and approaches is being proposed by the institution for its accreditation review. Drawing upon institutional data, especially that provided in the Data Tables addressing financial capacity, diversity and retention, this section should briefly describe i) the institution’s background, ii) strengths and challenges, and iii) the current state of the institution’s approaches to identifying and assessing student learning outcomes across the institution. The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (found embedded within the attached Data Exhibits for the Institutional Proposal) is to be submitted and is designed to be used developmentally across the CPR and the EER. In addition, the institution should identify how the Proposal responds to issues raised by the most recent Commission action letter and, where relevant, issues identified by the Substantive Change or Interim Report Committees.

Whittier College is a small private liberal arts institution, founded in 1887 by members of the Society of Friends. Though the college no longer has any formal association with that society, our identity today is tied closely with our history. Quaker values deriving from that association still influence our ideals and practices. Located on a 75 acre campus seventeen miles east of downtown Los Angeles, Whittier’s primary mission is undergraduate education, but we also offer graduate programs in education. Additionally, like a select group of liberal arts colleges, Whittier has a law school.

In 1975, Whittier Law School became part of Whittier College and it is now - with a beautiful stand-alone campus in Costa Mesa - the oldest Law School fully-accredited by the American Bar Association and the Association of American Law Schools in Orange County, California. It offers a full-time day program, a part-time day program, and a part-time evening program leading to the Doctor of Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree. Foreign law students may also earn an LL.M. in U.S. Legal Studies. The School’s strengths include Business Law, Criminal Law, Public Interest Law, Trial and Appellate Law, and the burgeoning fields of Intellectual Property Law, International Law, and Children's Rights.

In Whittier, the College has 20 departments; it offers 25 departmental majors and three established interdisciplinary ones. It also offers the Master of Arts in Education. The majority of undergraduate students enroll in the Liberal Education Program, which works in writing, science and mathematics, as well as in a variety of cultural studies offerings. About 90% of students enroll in the Whittier Scholars Program (WSP). This program offers students the opportunity to design their own academic programs with significant faculty support and oversight. WSP students may either create their own majors or include conventional ones; all are required to complete a senior project.

The Liberal Education Program, our “core curriculum,” provides an academic framework for collaboration and transformation through its emphasis on cultural perspectives and the importance of connections between different fields of knowledge. Both critical thinking (the development of the skills and methods necessary for systematic investigation - i.e., the ability to define, analyze, and synthesize using a variety of methods and technologies) and the practical application of knowledge inform all elements of the program and are central to the transformation that distinguishes Whittier College graduates. The goals of the Liberal Education Program are met by a set of core requirements that are contained in a framework of four categories, also known as the 4Cs: Community, Communication, Cultural Perspectives, and Connections.

In the fall of 2008, the College enrolled 1286 (FTE) students in its regular undergraduate program, with an additional 111 in various graduate and credentialing programs; the Law School enrolled 514. Forty-five percent of undergraduates were male, 55% female, while 76% of graduate students were female. Forty-five percent of undergraduates were white non-Hispanic, 28% Hispanic, with the other ethnically identifiable students divided among African American, Asian, Native American, and international students. Most (84%) entering freshman live on campus; 64% of the student body as a whole do so.

Law School students were 52% female and 48% male, with 51% white non-Hispanic, 20% Asian, and 12% each Hispanic and Native American.

Response to the Commission Action Letter

The last WASC team visited Whittier in the fall of 2001. Since then, a number of important changes and events have occurred.

- There has been a significant turnover of the senior administration. Katherine Will resigned as president in 2004. Vice President for Finance and Administration Jen Leguzza served as Interim President for the 2004-05 academic year, returning to her original position when Sharon Herzberger assumed the presidency in 2005. The current Vice President for Enrollment took office in July of 2004; the Vice President for Student Affairs came in March of 2006; the Vice President for Advancement began in March 2007; and the Vice President for Finance and Administration was on board beginning in December of 2008. The 2009-10 academic year began with two new senior administrators taking office: the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, and the Dean of the Law School. The Director of Athletics also reports directly to the president and attends senior staff meetings. Almost all of these changes have involved retirements and other typical progressions. Throughout these shifts, the ordinary life of the institution has continued and even flourished.

- Major improvements to physical facilities have included the opening in 2002 of the new Ross Hills Foundation Center for Information and Technology Resources, which includes Bonnie Bell Wardman Library, and the Campus Center and Villalobos Hall in 2008. Several residence halls have undergone extensive renovations, and Hoover Hall - one of the principal classroom buildings - was renovated in the
summer of 2009.

- In 2005 the American Bar Association placed the Whittier Law School on a two-year probation, citing low passage rates for graduates taking the bar exam for the first time. This provided a major challenge not only for the Law School itself, but for the College as well, as measures required to remove probation demanded a significant reduction in the contribution the Law School could make to the institution as a whole and led to a downsizing of the Law School's tenured faculty and student body. Budgetary adjustments were made to preserve the quality of the academic program and to increase the school's legal writing and academic success programs. In addition, the Law School made substantial changes in its admissions practices (reducing the size of the student body and improving its entering qualifications). These measures worked and first time passage rate has increased dramatically (from 40% in 2005 to 84% in July of 2008). Probationary status was removed in June 2008.

- The College faculty adopted a revised Liberal Education Program in 2005. The Liberal Education Program retained the spirit and a number of requirements from the previous "core" program but also made improvements over that program. Curricular discussions elicited and clarified certain values and led to their being articulated as they had not been earlier. The Liberal Education Program provides an academic framework for collaboration and transformation between academic disciplines and in concert with co-curricular activities. The goals of the Liberal Education Program are met through a set of core requirements framed in four categories that reflect what the College values most:

  - **Community:** The transformative experience begins in learning communities that introduce the idea of building connections across disciplines, as well as the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the world.
  - **Communication:** Students learn to communicate understanding using different sets of symbols.
  - **Cultural Perspectives:** Students gain cultural perspective by exploring different cultures.
  - **Connections:** Students again connect as a community in the context of interdisciplinary courses and paired courses.

Specific learning goals are for students to develop:

1. The ability to make connections across disciplines in order to understand the convergence and divergence of different fields of knowledge and to understand the nature of an academic community.

2. An understanding of, and competency in, the use of signs and symbols to construct, create, perceive, and communicate meaning.

3. The capacity to entertain multiple perspectives and interpretations.

4. An understanding of culture and of the connections between themselves and others in relation to physical, historical, social, and global contexts.

5. Breadth, defined as familiarity with essential concepts in major fields, and depth, defined as knowledge of at least one field (usually achieved in the major).

Whittier's co-curricular programs - Residential Life, Faculty Masters Program, the Cultural Center, athletics programs, clubs and organizations, etc. - are also designed around these 4Cs.

- Changes particularly significant for the purposes of the self-study proposal included establishing first-year linked courses, rethinking the cultural studies requirements, and the addition of a required senior presentation in the major. The discussions also included specific efforts to provide concrete learning outcomes, and the faculty and the administration have put considerable resources and time into the development of a new first year experience.

- We added two new majors: Chinese Studies and Global and Cultural Studies, and we have added a Film Studies minor. The Environmental Studies program has been completely revised, changing from Environmental Science. This revision reflects a change from our Earth Sciences program, which was dropped. We also eliminated interdisciplinary majors in Comparative Cultures and International Relations and an Asian Studies minor when we created the Global and Cultural Studies minor. The Child Development and Art programs have had fairly significant restructuring, and our Physical Education and Recreation department has become the department of Kinesiology and Leisure Studies.

Whittier was last reaccredited by WASC in 2002 in a process in which the College sought to design for itself an accreditation framework that would enable us to reflect on "the extent to which individual projects and programs resonate with the College's over-arching institutional goals and mission, and to discover new directions and programs that would sustain our mission and excellence." That Self-Study was organized to reflect on a series of issues, including: the core curriculum and the Whittier Scholars Program; departments and program assessment; personnel issues; diversity issues; retention; the capital campaign; the library; support for disabled students; and campus renovations.

The Commission applauded the College's ability to launch a successful capital campaign, stabilize enrollment and increase retention, and renovate substantial parts of the campus, even as there was then considerable turnover in the senior administration. With recognition of our progress, the Commission's Action Letter contained four important recommendations, to which we responded.

1. That the newly revised Liberal Education Program build into its implementation a mechanism for assessing the mechanism of the core in meeting student learning and strategic goals.

We began our assessment of the Liberal Education Program by examining the gateway writing course required of all first year students. Our data showed that Hispanic students were not as successful as peers from other ethnic backgrounds in this course, and other data indicated that these students often learned best studying in more informal groups under the guidance of a mentor. As a result of this information, we took two steps that have dramatically improved our results: first, we established a Living and Learning Community program where students who were in the same writing class also share living space in the same residence hall. Second, we
created a "linked" course structure wherein students in the writing classes also take a subject class together, so that groups of about fifteen students are linked through participation in both classes and in living arrangements. In addition, the freshman writing instructor also serves as the student mentor until they declare a major.

The role of the Assessment Committee on campus has grown considerably, and the language of assessment has become ingrained in campus culture. The administration gave concrete support to assessment by naming an Associate Dean whose responsibilities explicitly include assessment (half-time), as well as the First-Year Program. She, together with the Assessment Committee, developed a comprehensive plan for assessment. The program to assess the Liberal Education Program is planned to assess one of the 46's each year.

As of September 2009, the Assessment Committee has completed an examination of Community. During the academic year 2009-10, assessment will begin on the next "C" - Culture. We understood the Commission's recommendation to assess the core as also including departmental assessment of the program, and we have begun to work a plan that will assess the liberal education program at the departmental level.

2. That the College integrate learning outcomes into programmatic reviews and that programmatic reviews be separated from the preparation for an accreditation visit. The Commission asked that Whittier go beyond collecting student satisfaction measures in seeking to assess the effectiveness of the academic programs.

All academic departments have developed mission, goals, learning outcomes and curricular maps. Each department has been asked to complete an assessment of one of their learning outcomes annually. Departments have submitted a long term plan (five years) for assessing all of their learning outcomes. The annual assessment is designed to contribute to the five year department review. The inventory of Effective Educational Indicators in the Appendix shows the progress of our assessment efforts for both academic affairs and for the co-curriculum.

The Assessment Committee and the Associate Dean have crafted a completely revised program for analyzing the effectiveness of the academic programs through a comprehensive self study. The measures for analysis go well beyond "student satisfaction" data to include the following:

- Providing for a comprehensive departmental-level assessment, the College has developed a process that is assessment-rich and provides a mechanism for "closing the loop." Departments now have two options: either a traditional review or a theme-based review. Consistent with Commission recommendations, all departments are now on a five year cycle for department review. Moreover, there is a mechanism for college-wide review of departmental reviews that involve reports both to the College's Assessment Committee and the Faculty's Educational Policy Committee. This provides a mechanism to review the department conclusions as well as assess interdepartmental trends. The conclusions of the committee are used in any considerations of curricular policy across disciplines, and are folded into the budgetary process for cases such as position requests. Recommendations are then sent to the Dean of the Faculty for review.

- We acknowledge that the process should have begun earlier so as not to appear to be done solely for the WASC review, though we believe that the mechanism for assessment that we have developed will bring these reviews into a regular cycle. We have begun with the Departments of Chemistry for the fall of 2009 and in the spring of 2010, the departments of Art and Art History, Business Administration, Economics, Mathematics and Music will be reviewed. In the spring of 2011, Education and Child Development, Kinesiology and Leisure Studies, Religious Studies, Modern Languages and Theatre will undergo department reviews. In the spring of 2012 English Language and Literature, History, and Philosophy will complete the department review cycle. In 2013 academic programs to undergo reviews will be Environmental Sciences, Gender and Women's Studies, Global and Cross Cultural Studies, Social Work, and the Whittier Scholars Program.

- An interactive course web site was developed to both showcase and house assessment work, allowing departments to view each other's progress and provide a mechanism for the Assessment Committee to work on department level assessment with faculty from each department through the web site itself. Members of the Assessment Committee provide input on the development of learning outcomes and methodology for assessing the outcomes, and they help in analyzing and interpreting data directly through the web site. A rubric was developed based on the WASC rubric on assessing learning outcomes. Each department's assessment project is "scored" based on the rubric.

- The annual assessments have already elicited curricular changes based on evidence of student learning. For example, the Economics Department found that students were not learning the objectives established in their introductory courses at the level they expected. This led the faculty to re-evaluate their introductory courses so that more time could be devoted to the objectives, allowing students to gain a better foundation of knowledge. They also did an analysis of student learning to teaching approaches comparing the degree of learning for specific content through a comparison of the different sections of the course and the pedagogical approaches used.

- The Department of Education and Child Development examined the learning outcomes established for their field methods course CHDV 220. A rubric was developed and student papers were evaluated by the faculty in the department pointing to weaknesses in writing up research papers. It was decided that more class time needed to be devoted to the writing and analysis components of this course and less time should be spent on alternative assignments such as poster presentations, observations, and interviews. Whittier College has been awarded a grant by the Teagle Foundation that will help us develop a systematic way to provide data for departments to use in their assessment plans. Through the use of a data reporting system, departments will be able to have custom reports developed using multiple sources of internal and external data including data held in our Banner System as well as national data such as NSSE, HEDS. The data management model will first be tested through the examination of two specific learning effectiveness issues: 1) improving underrepresented minority students' performance in gateway courses in math, science, and writing that are critical predictors of later student success; and 2) measuring the impact and effectiveness of community-based learning initiatives on student engagement and learning.

3. That the College establish a budgeting process that would establish greater alignment between curricular demands and available resources, with priorities that recognized that not all good ideas could be funded.

- Budgets reflect an institution's goals. Therefore, at Whittier we establish criteria and priorities that guide our budget deliberations. The Strategic Plan calls for us to develop a more distinctive and attractive program, improve our reputation, and thus attract a larger
body of well-qualified applicants who will matriculate as strong and committed Whittier College students. We recognize that not everything included in the Strategic Plan can be accomplished or funded in a given year, and our current budget priorities have driven budget allocation decisions since 2005. Therefore, the Budget Group establishes annual budget priorities. While all budgets are reviewed and reallocations are sometimes made, the Group focuses primarily in allocating new resources. Because budget lines have not been increased "across the board" in the last nine years, some revenue has been available to allocate through the planning process to strategic initiatives.

- **Financial stability and integrity.** Strengthening activities include supporting student recruitment and retention, enhancing reputation and visibility, securing grants, maintaining the endowment's spending rate at 5%, and realistic but opportunistic budgeting. The College has reduced its spending rate to 5%, and we have shifted substantial revenue to our First Year Program, with resulting increases in retention and graduation rates. In addition, we put $250,000 into a complete revision and rebuilding of our website and $115,000 into the creation of new admission materials, with good results, including an 18% increase in applications.

- **Enriching the Academic Experience.** We preserve the integrity of, and promote progress in, our core educational mission by implementing the results of program reviews and providing necessary academic support for departments, and via library, media, and technology resources. Additionally, select areas of distinction are being created by developing strategic clusters. These academic clusters form the centerpiece of fundraising in our upcoming Capital Campaign.

Critical to Whittier's academic experience is recruiting and retaining the very best among faculty and staff by offering competitive compensation packages. We are making progress in achieving faculty salary parity by continuing to implement the multi-pronged approach endorsed by the Board of Trustees at its November 2003 meeting. Beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, salaries have increases have all been in the 5-8% range, significantly more than they had been in the past. In fact, the average Whittier salary increased by 22.5% between the 2004-2005 and 2008-2009 academic years. Though we have made progress relative to our comparison group in some areas from year-to-year, our comparison schools have been progressing as well. Perhaps the best way to think about this is that, as compared to the past, we have not fallen significantly behind in the salary market, are offering competitive entry level salaries, and have eliminated salary compression and equity concerns. Whittier's salaries for the 2009-2010 year will rise by an average 1.5%. (A recent survey conducted by HEDS - the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium - showed that nearly two-thirds of the 92 participating colleges were not able to provide salary increases for this year.)

An important point is that there is significant variation from year-to-year in the number of comparison schools that actually provide us with data. For example, in the 2008-2009 data, one of the missing schools is towards the low end in compensation for full professors. The absence of these data had the impact of increasing the average salaries and hence the parity gap at that rank.

- **Improving student recruitment.** Recruitment efforts and messages have been updated. We are leveraging our designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution in the nation, California, and Los Angeles/Orange County areas. The role of the College's coaches in the recruiting process has expanded and strategic decisions about facilities improvements have been made. Financial aid funds are used to help maintain and enhance faculty salary and support retention. In fact, net revenue from tuition has increased from about $16M in 2002-03 to about $25M in 2008-09.

- **Improving student retention.** The aspects of Whittier College that make us distinctive as a national liberal arts college (e.g., location, practical liberal arts, interdisciplinary focus, diversity of student body) have been promoted through investment in the first-year experience and additional attention to the engagement and success of sophomores. After dropping a low of 72.3% for the Fall 2005 entering class, first-year retention rose to 80.6% for the Fall 2007 class as the new first-year programs took effect. Retention of the Fall 2008 entering class will be slightly lower than this, with preliminary data indicating that a majority of those students who are not returning are doing so for financial reasons.

- **Preserving and enhancing the physical plant and support services.** We have and will continue to address campus environment issues with an emphasis on providing safe, well-maintained, program appropriate, and aesthetically pleasing campus facilities. During 2002 to 2004, improvement projects included a library expansion and renovation that doubled building capacity and created the Rose Hills Foundation Center for Library and Information Resources. In April 2004, the College issued $60 million of general obligation bonds, backed by revenues and refunding bonds. From that bond issuance, approximately $17 million went towards the restoration of the Law School campus, $24 million was used for the acquisition of land and buildings previously leased, and $16 million was used for Whittier campus projects. These projects included the renovation of Stauffer and Johnson residence halls including interior upgrades and improvements to the electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems; expansion and renovation of the Student Center including the addition of the J. Villalobos Hall, a complete renovation of the dining facility and addition of a north wing to create a student lounge and new space for student services; renovation to the Beaver Hall, one of oldest and highest use academic buildings including the replacement of the HVAC mechanical system, electrical and plumbing system improvements and refurbishing of the interior. All projects included ADA improvements as required by building codes.

4. That the Board of Trustees approve the Faculty Handbook which includes the Academic Freedom Statement, and notify the Commission by September 1, 2002 that this had been adopted.

As reflected in the minutes of the Plenary Session of the Board of Trustees meeting on November 1, 2002, the Board "adopted in principle the American Association of University Professors 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure."

The Statement was then and is now posted on the College's web site:

http://www.whittier.edu/Academics/AcademicRequirements/PoliciesAndProcedures/default.aspx

http://www.whittier.edu/FacultyAndStaff/FacultyResources/default.aspx

2. Preliminary Self-Review under the Standards of Accreditation

Using the WASC "Worksheet for Preliminary Self-Review Under the Standards" and the "What Really Matters on Your Campus?" exercise, or through other means, the institution is to identify key issues arising under the Standards, especially those relating to student learning results and organizational learning/quality assurance systems, and demonstrate that these issues are being addressed through the approach taken by the institution in its Proposal and plan of work. [The Self-Review Worksheet may be submitted as an appendix and is optional.]

During the year-long active planning planning process, both faculty and staff groups were drawn into a discussion of of the Self-Review Process with the Steering Committee. While the Steering Committee felt that the College is in compliance with most of the standards, it did identify selected areas for improvement. Indeed, some of these areas that were identified are incorporated in our proposal. Our worksheet is appended to this section.

Standard One: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives

1.2. Though we feel that our educational objectives are clearly recognized, we are currently engaged in editing various institutional documents for clarity and consistency in order to make sure that values such as globalization and diversity are incorporated throughout. We are in the process of revising our Mission Statement. Articulation of educational objectives and learning outcomes may be uneven across departments and our plan is to focus attention on these departments during the Capacity and Preparedness Review.

1.5. Diversity is a main theme and to be addressed in both CPR and EER, it is one of our key strengths, but we need to continue developing, to analyze, and to articulate its connection to all aspects of what we do. During the 2009-10 academic year, our Assessment Committee will be assessing our curricular "Culture requirement" to help us understand how this curricular piece is advancing our mission.

Standard Two: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

We have a long-standing review process that focuses on appropriateness and professional standards of our academic programs. Our undergraduate program is indeed focused on development of core learning capacities, critical analysis, and developing the ability to engage in lifelong learning. CPR 2.2a and the evidence available in our program reviews and Assessment Committee documents provide the content for the theme we have chosen. The EER should also speak to the relationship of our chosen themes to the entire educational enterprise.

2.4 and 2.7. In the past seven years, as noted earlier, the College has devoted significant energy and resources to setting explicit learning expectations and assessing their outcomes. Moreover, the College has "closed the loop" by using this assessment data for programmatic improvement. We understand that some aspects of our assessment program (for example, assessment of senior papers and presentations) require more development and clearer articulation. Working on this is part of our normal institutional process, and the Capacity and Preparedness Review will speak to our structures for this. It should be a major part of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

2.8 and 2.9. The CPR will speak explicitly about support for student learning, especially in relation to undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity (URSCA). The National Survey of Student Engagement has consistently provided evidence that Whittier stands out among its peers in its commitment to learning across disciplines, active engagement as a pedagogy, and the educational impact of the diversity of our campus. In this decade, Whittier College has developed an active service learning program and worked diligently to begin integrating such programming into our curriculum. We have continued to assess this program, and in a May 2008 independent evaluation of our service learning programs, Christine Cress, PhD, an assessment specialist from Portland State University wrote that "Whittier College is on a strong trajectory for becoming a nationally recognized civically engaged institution. Faculty and students are engaged in exemplary civic engagement and service learning work." Thus, we feel that we have strong programs in place. Our plan is to obtain campus consensus on the structure for mentorship undergraduate research. Moreover, we have evidence that shows our campus recognizes and promotes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning, and service. Both faculty evaluation standards such as the adoption of the "Boyer Standards" for scholarship, and the promotion decisions from the last six years point to our strong belief in the integration of teaching and learning for faculty and students. The role of student support services and of co-curricular programs is an important aspect of all three of our themes discussed below. These should be addressed in both CPR and EER, and we need to develop means for regular assessment of student satisfaction with support services, and ways to incorporate such assessments into action plans.

Standard Three: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability
Developing and managing resources to ensure sustainability must be a major focus at Whittier, and our CPR will address relevant issues.

3.6. Though we have had a significant improvement in information technological resources since the last WASC visit, we know that this issue is a moving target, and that we will continue to need improvement in this area, and they will be developed at length in the CPR. We brought a consultant group to campus in September of 2009 to advise us on the Library, media services, and Information Technology. We expect a report by the end of October 2009 that will help us improve services and improve student learning.

Standard Four: Creating and Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement

The Capacity and Preparedness Review will address questions of strategic thinking and planning. The major developments in our assessment program and practices since the last WASC visit are core here. Our program approval and review processes have been an important part of what we do as an institution for a long time; systematic institution-wide assessment in terms of student learning outcomes is a more recent focus. We do already participate in using some standardized assessment instruments that allow comparison with other selected institutions, but we do not yet have a clearly articulated institution-wide idea of exactly what we are doing with them, or, indeed, with some of the other data that we collect.

The CPR will pay particular attention to the sorts of data we gather, and who gathers it, as well as how it is shared; it will also speak to areas where we may need to focus. The EER should demonstrate ways in which we have used such data to make significant changes, particularly in the areas relevant to our three central themes.

4.4 We realize that Academic Departmental Program Reviews on consistent basis have lagged behind our expectations. However, the Program Reviews have been scheduled, and they will be happening over the next few years. The Steering Committee noted that support needed to be offered to departments so that these reviews would not be so burdensome. The Associate Dean for the First Year Experience and Assessment has been working with departments to develop rubrics and to support them as they begin this process. Having a choice of a thematic or traditional review process has helped departments think through the issues involved with this process. Other programs in the College have been engaged in scheduled assessment practices— as noted above, for example, we brought an assessment person to campus in 2008 to examine our service learning program.

Attachments
- Worksheet_for_Preliminary_Self_Review.doc
- Worksheet_for_Preliminary_Self_Review_NOTES_FOR_PROPOSAL.doc
- What_really_matters.doc

3. Process for Proposal Development and Leadership Involvement

In this section, the institution should describe how it went about developing the Proposal design and generated broad institutional support for it. Key institutional leaders, especially the chief executive officer, chief academic officer, and faculty leadership, should be significantly involved in the design and implementation of the Proposal and be demonstrably committed to its implementation and success.

Whittier began our discussions for our next WASC review during the 2006-7 academic year. The Academic Vice President and WASC ALO, Dr. Susan Gotsch, attended a WASC workshop. To begin early planning the Academic Vice President and ALO sent out a proposal in the spring of 2007 for discussion to department chairs. She noted the need for college-wide development of a proposal, and she explained that the process was heading in the direction of a more streamlined, collaborative program review process.

The planning process developed into a college-wide discussion about the nature and shape of the proposal. Service on WASC Visiting Committees and the WASC workshops proved very useful. President Herberger demonstrated her commitment to the accreditation process with service on two WASC Visiting Review Teams (October of 2007 and March of 2009) and Dr. Gotsch served on a Visiting Team in October of 2006. The college recognized the value of the WASC conferences—in the fall of 2007, the college sent the chair of the College's faculty assessment committee, the Associate Dean for the First Year Experience and Assessment, the Dean of Students, the Director of the Library, and the Dean of the Faculty attended a 2008 workshop, and in 2009, the President's Executive Assistant and the Associate Dean, together with two faculty attended another conference and workshop.

Participation in the WASC workshops led to discussions with the senior staff during the winter and spring of 2008. Based on the recommendations of the Dean of the Faculty and the team that attended the WASC meeting the Senior Staff decided in February of 2008 to choose a Thematic, rather than a Traditional, format for reaccreditation.

Following the decision by the Senior Staff, an invitation was sent to all members of the community to participate in discussions regarding the development of two to four topics, themes or questions that could be asked and answered as part of the WASC reaccreditation process. The first step in the process was to identify the themes and develop a proposal that described what is to be studied, how it would be studied, and why it was important to the future of the College. Specifically, groups were asked to consider the following in suggesting
themes:

- Themes should be institutionally focused;
- Themes that cross boundaries and are interdisciplinary in nature;
- Topics should be focused on things the College is already working on, because the College needs to improve, wants information for marketing or fundraising, or think that the questions would help the institution move forward. In essence, this would provide an opportunity to look at something that is already being done at the College and will have substantial benefit for the College to analyze systematically;
- New areas for examination should not be discouraged as long as these areas would help the College clarify specific issues;
- The topics must be able to be assessed in ways that are double and usable.

Senior staff members were asked to engage their respective constituent groups to ensure broad campus input. The faculty Educational Policies Committee (EPC) served as the "clearing house" for vetting the various ideas. Feedback from various faculty groups, the Student Senate, Student Life, and departmental offices was received and summarized in March 2008. Three themes emerged as possibilities for study:

- The development of community as it relates to the first-year experience and specific components such as the living-learning communities, declaration of major, advising, collaborative learning, faculty-staff interaction, and co-curricular engagement;
- Learning through diversity is a key characteristic of Whittier College and as the only Annapolis Group HSI, examining how well the institution is prepared to provide a good learning environment for a diverse student body by studying access, retention, institutional receptivity, and achievement in student learning and leadership;
- Connections between various disciplines and experiences, specifically community-based learning and undergraduate research.

Based on this input, the Faculty and Staff WASC committee developed the three themes that form the basis for the Self-Study at the end of May 2008. The College community began to formulate the more explicit plans during the 2008-9 academic year. The Board of Trustees was involved in the process and informed regarding the initial feel. In November of 2008, President Herzberger sent a letter to the member of Steering Committee charging them to develop a proposal. Members were chosen from the wider college community, and included faculty, administrators, a student representative, and a liaison to the Law School. Discussions continued with the Deans Council and the Faculty Executive Committee. At its May 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees engaged in a brief presentation about the themes as they had evolved; trustees provided some input and acknowledged that these areas of inquiry would be beneficial for the College’s future. With the arrival of the new Vice President for Academic Affairs, Charlotte Borst, who became the College’s Academic Liaison Officer, the planning process continued with the naming of an Implementation Committee in the fall of 2009 that will work together to provide continuity and leadership on campus for the Capacity Review.

B. Framing the Review Process to Connect the Capacity and Educational Effectiveness Reviews

Introduction

The Commission support document “Expectations for Two Reviews” is a useful reference document that will be of assistance in developing this section, especially items 2 and 3 below. (See www.wascsenior.org/institutional/proposal for additional material).

Attachments [i] Expectations_for_Two_Reviews.doc

1. Overview and Goals for the Accreditation Review Process

The institution should describe in this overview section a coherent vision and specific outcomes for the entire accrediting review as a single connected process, specifying what it intends to accomplish, and how the CPR and EER are connected and aligned to achieve these outcomes. The institution should also consider the outcomes intended for the accreditation review process as identified in the section "Outcomes of the Accreditation Review Process" in the Handbook.

The primary purpose of the self-study is to evaluate and improve Whittier College. We want to build on some of our demonstrated strengths, even as we address some very pressing challenges. We hope that this entire process helps the College to deepen our understanding of student learning and to enhance our dedication to institutional learning and planning.

The three themes around which we wish to develop our Self-Study - Community, Diversity, and Connections - derive from the College's heritage and values articulated by our Quaker founders. The themes are closely related, and ultimately they tie to everything we do at Whittier. For the purposes of this Self-Study, we wish to emphasize certain aspects of the themes that have been the particular focus of many of our recent institutional efforts.

Our proposed overall (institutional) goals include:

- To enhance the development and use of indicators of institutional performance and educational effectiveness.
- To enhance Whittier's use of indicators of institutional performance and educational effectiveness for our institutional planning and
decision making.

- To engage the faculty on issues of assessing and improving teaching and learning and to help Whittier align support systems for the faculty more effectively.
- To identify and assess barriers to student success and graduation.
- To ensure that we live up to our commitment to diversity by identifying barriers to student success.

Accreditation goal:

- To validate Whittier's presentation of evidence to assess compliance with accreditation and to provide (as noted above) a basis for institutional improvement.

1. Community

Community was an important value for the essentially non-hierarchical Society of Friends. As an academic organization, Whittier certainly possesses both an intellectual and an administrative hierarchy, but we continue to place a high value on community, attempting to reach consensus where we can, fostering the development of the whole life of individuals within our community. Moreover, we are committed to the ideal that the life of the mind requires interaction with other minds. For the Self-Study, we intend to pay particular attention to the ways in which we introduce new students into our community and foster their becoming active members.

More specifically, during this reaccreditation process we plan to focus on the extensive efforts we have recently put into devising a coherent first-year experience. We believe that the sooner students find a niche in the institution, and the more educationally significant that niche is, the more successful their identification with the institution and its mission will be.

Our goals for this part of the study will be:

- Determine what parts of community are not working for the 20% of our first year students who leave the college after their first year.
- Determine what parts of community are not working for another 20% of our students who leave after the first year but before graduation. We need to understand if we have a "sophomore slump."
- Determine the role the academic component plays in retaining students both after the first year and in subsequent years.
- Determine what role non-academic factors play in retaining students.

2. Diversity

Fostering community requires an understanding of the people who constitute our community. Whittier was founded on a principle of inclusiveness and diversity, and currently almost half of our student body is students of color. This richness of backgrounds, as well as the social diversity that comes from drawing community members from a variety of economic and geographic groups, matters to us partly because of our longstanding commitment to social justice. It also matters because we are committed to the belief that an education in a diverse setting best prepares students to comprehend and succeed in the world in which we live. Recent research shows that a diverse learning environment within the classroom leads to greater cognitive complexity for all students, and that prolonged contact, such as we have in our residential, liberal arts community, may have a stronger effect on cognitive complexity than does singular or intermittent contact. Putting our commitments into practice requires attention to both curricular development and co-curricular programming, and our work also has significant implications for recruiting and retention.

As one of the most diverse colleges in the country, with a goal to be a pipeline for areas such as those in STEM fields where there historically has been a low percentage of students of color, we want to ensure that there are no barriers to success at Whittier College. We believe strongly in the value of high impact practices (as defined by George Kuh and others). We want to ensure that students of all backgrounds benefit from all of these practices.

Our examination of diversity has three foci that derive from WASC's statement on the dimensions for diversity in higher education:

1. What is the experience of various student cohorts at Whittier (i.e., representation)?
2. What is the effect of our diversity on our campus culture (i.e., the nature of campus community)?
3. Are we successfully providing the cultural competence we want our students to acquire (i.e., the impact of group membership on both individual development and the content of academic scholarship and study)?

Our particular goal for this theme will be:

- to determine whether or not our courses for our Liberal Education Culture requirement are meeting the learning needs of a diverse student population.

3. Connections

In addition to community and diversity, Whittier's tradition of interdisciplinary work reflects another aspect of the faceted and interconnected nature of reality. Interdisciplinarity also incorporates the Quaker tradition of a practical education, a tradition that is reflected in the College's long history of service-oriented academic programs, of majors and programs that connect academic work with the necessity of functioning in the world outside and beyond the College. We educate through the particular, but we educate in, about, and for life in a much larger world, and our students need to learn this connection - both as - through putting it into practice while they are students. The particular Connections we propose to emphasize during our Self-Study are those involved in undergraduate research, or as we have phrased it, URSCA - undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity.

We understand that a fruitful undergraduate research experience should allow students to see the connections between the theoretical and the practical and provide essential knowledge in choosing a career path. The expanded definition of undergraduate research reflects the different
nature of and models for such work across the disciplines. The definition used by the Council on Undergraduate Research, "an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline," fits with this, but we recognize the need for further discussion and definition across campus.

Our goals for this study of community include:
- Understanding whether URSCA experiences influence retention;
- Understanding whether URSCA experiences influence career choices;
- Understanding if we provide a integrated transition between the required senior presentation/paper and participation in URSCA;
- Understanding how well our faculty personnel process is integrated with URSCA.

2. Approach for the Capacity and Preparatory Review

This section should describe how the institution intends to address the Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity as follows:

2.i. Self-Assessment of Capacity

Discuss the institution's self-assessment of its capacity (resources, structures and processes), especially under Standards 1, 3 and 4. The institution should identify key issues and strategic themes it intends to address in the CPR and the intended outcomes for the CPR. For each issue and/or theme, the institution should identify what key indicators will be developed or relied on, who will be involved, and the specific organization of activities to achieve the outcomes identified. This section should reference, where appropriate, the institution's self-review under the Standards and Criteria for Review (CfRs) that will be emphasized in the CPR.

Whittier College is fortunate to have a strong senior management team that is dedicated to student learning. Moreover, we have a strong faculty governance tradition with committees that oversee curricular issues, share in discussions and decisions about budgetary allocations, and work with the senior staff to achieve change when needed. Our administrative staff, while lean in terms of numbers, are tasked first with assessment and reflection of what we do well and what we need to do better. While fiscal resources are limited, our financial picture is stable and we chose to begin strategic planning to take advantage of opportunities that may present themselves during this period of national fiscal instability.

There is a climate of assessment on campus, and we presently have two Associate Deans in Academic Affairs whose duties include assessment and data management. This team will be supplemented with one more Assistant Dean to be hired in the fall of 2009, whose responsibilities will include data analysis and outreach work with departments and programs. There is a strong sense of collaboration within each division, and across the College. This collaboration can be demonstrated by long-range planning efforts underway during the fall of 2009, where faculty, staff, student representatives, senior administrators, and Board of Trustee members are involved in weekend meetings for planning.

Section C.1 outlines our workplan. We realize that our choice of themes for the EER are ambitious, but we believe that we have many of the systems in place now to begin to analyze the data that we have collected. At this point, our plans for the CPR will be to develop systems of analysis that can enable us to identify areas of needed change. Our current faculty committee structure (which includes many administrators as ex officio participants), in tandem with the WASC Steering Committee, will be working closely with the College's Budget Group to ensure that funding priorities are aligned with the EER goals. Other sections of this report have identified areas we know we need to develop further.

2.ii. Infrastructure

Discuss the institution's infrastructure to support educational effectiveness, especially under Standards 2 and 4.

Standard Two: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions

Whittier has a long-standing review process of our academic programs that focuses on appropriateness and professional standards. Our undergraduate program is indeed focused on development of core learning capacities, critical analysis, and developing the ability to engage in lifelong learning. The graduate program, which is focused solely in education, conforms with state of California and other assessment and credentialing requirements. Thus, mission, goals, learning outcomes, curricular maps, and assessment plans are well defined and published.

The Law School uses somewhat different criteria that has largely been defined by the accreditation standards of the American Bar Association, including Bar Passage rates. However, the Law School, in conjunction with the ABA, is mandating defined objectives for the Introduction to Legal Analysis courses (set out in the syllabi), as well as objectives for each class session and each assignment. We also maintain a common list of desired learning outcomes (LO's) in the coursework, as well as in the case studies used in the course. The Law School has a common list of desired learning outcomes (LO's) in each of the Law School's courses, as well as in the case studies used in the course.

CFR 2.2a and the evidence available in our undergraduate program reviews and Assessment Committee documents provide the context for the theme we have chosen. The EER should also speak to the relationship of our chosen themes to the entire educational enterprise.

2.4 and 2.7. In the past seven years, as noted earlier, the College has devoted significant energy and resources to setting explicit learning
expectations and assessing their outcomes. Moreover, the College has “closed the loop” by using this assessment data for programmatic improvement. We understand that some aspects of our assessment program (for example, assessment of senior papers and presentations) require more development and clearer articulation. Working on this is part of our normal institutional process, and the Capacity and Preparedness Review will speak to our structures for this. It should be a major part of the Educational Effectiveness Review.

2.8 and 2.9 The CPR will speak explicitly about support for student learning, especially in relation to undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity (URSCA). The role of student support services and of co-curricular programs is an important aspect of all three of our WASC themes. These should be addressed in both the CPR and EER, and we need to develop means for regular assessment of student satisfaction with support services, and ways to incorporate such assessments into action plans.

Standard Four: Creating and Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement

The Capacity and Preparedness Review will address questions of strategic thinking and planning. The major developments in our assessment program and practices since the last WASC visit are key here. There is significant capacity within the College for organizational planning for learning and improvement. The College as a whole is committed to long-range planning, and during the fall of 2009, the President and her Senior Staff initiated several planning exercises with Board members and faculty and staff.

More specifically, our program approval and review processes have been an important part of what we do as an institution for a long time; systematic institution-wide assessment in terms of student learning outcomes is a more recent focus. We already participate in using a number of standardized assessment instruments that allow comparison with other selected institutions, but we do not yet have a clearly articulated institution-wide idea of exactly what we are doing with them, or, indeed, with some of the other data that we collect. By the time of the CPR, we expect to have completed an analysis of what data we will need to complete our EER, and what processes we will use to analyze the data. Assisting us in these exercises will be a new Assistant Dean whose responsibilities will include assessment analysis. It is expected that this person will work closely with the Associate Dean for the First Year Experience and Assessment.

In another area that ties into the recommendation of the Commission in our 2001/02 report, the College is now committed to using assessment data from departments for resource allocation. For example, the Educational Policy Committee will use departmental reviews for recommendations that will cycle into budgetary decisions for needed resources such as space and faculty positions. The CPR will pay particular attention to the sort of data we gather, and who gathers it, as well as how it is shared; it will also speak to areas where we may need to focus. The EER should demonstrate ways in which we have used such data to make significant changes, particularly in the areas relevant to our three central themes.

2.iii. Preparation and Progress toward EER

Discuss the institution’s level of preparation for, and progress toward, the EER at the time of the CPR.

We believe that our assessment practices are already in place and so we expect that data collection will continue. In preparation for the EER, we plan to develop methodologies to collect data for our three WASC themes. At the time of the EER, we plan to devote significant time to the data we have collected to reflect on it, and plan strategies to close the loop. Section 3, which details our approach to the EER, also details some of the preparation and plans we will have at the time of the CPR for the EER.

3. Approach for the Educational Effectiveness Review

This section should describe how the institution intends to address the Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness as follows:

*The Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators should be included as part of the Data Exhibits (Section D1).*

Whittier College's approach to the Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness Review grows out of the College's adoption of the Liberal Education Program in 2005. Our Liberal Education Program provides an academic framework for collaboration and transformation between academic disciplines and in concert with co-curricular activities. The goals of the Liberal Education Program are met through a set of core requirements framed in four categories that reflect what the College values most: Community, Communication, Cultural Perspectives, and Connections, or the "4Cs," as they are known. Whittier's co-curricular programs - Residential Life, Faculty Musters Program, the Cultural Center, athletics programs, clubs and organizations, etc. - are also designed around these 4Cs.

The decision to choose a Thematic Review was based on finding an area of review that would allow the College to focus its energies on issues that are important and to assess whether we are, in fact, accomplishing the learning outcomes we have set for ourselves. The three Themes that were chosen—Community, Diversity, and Connections, reflected a College-wide consensus.

**Themes**

The three themes around which we wish to develop our Self-Study - *Community, Diversity, and Connections* - derive from the College's heritage and values articulated by our Quaker founders. The themes are closely related, and ultimately they tie to everything we do at Whittier. But for the purposes of this Self-Study, we wish to emphasize certain aspects of the themes that have been the particular focus of many of our recent institutional efforts.
1. Community

Community was an important value for the essentially non-hierarchical Society of Friends. As an academic organization, Whittier certainly possesses both an intellectual and an administrative hierarchy, but we continue to place a high value on community, attempting to reach consensus where we can, fostering the development of the whole life of individuals within our community. Moreover, we are committed to the idea that the life of the mind requires interaction with other minds. For the Self-Study, we intend to pay particular attention to the ways in which we introduce new students into our community and foster their becoming active members.

More specifically, during this reaccreditation process we plan to focus on the extensive efforts we have recently put into devising a coherent first-year experience. We believe that the sooner students find a niche in the institution, and the more educationally significant that niche is, the more successful their identification with the institution and its mission will be.

In order to achieve this identification, we have designed a comprehensive program for first-year students that we term "links." This program was developed after a comprehensive assessment of the first-year writing program showed that certain groups performed differently and moreover, that these groups had substantially poorer retention rates. Now our "Links Program" has new students choose a first semester writing seminar that is linked with another course in which they are also enrolled during that semester. Students enrolled in the two courses also live near each other in a residence hall. This becomes their Living and Learning Community (LLC); commuter students enrolled in the courses also have access the LLC and are included in all its activities. Students remain in the same residence hall for the entire year, but most of the LLC activities occur in the first semester.

Having assessed our writing program, we now propose to examine the effect of the First Year Experience program, focusing on measures of student satisfaction, retention, and the achievement of particular learning outcomes. Based on our NSSE data, there is a disparity between the freshmen and the senior year experiences at Whittier. With seniors, we find high levels of academic engagement, participation in College events, clubs and organizations, the development of rich diversity experiences, and the development of strong relationships with faculty. Clearly, those students who remain at the College until the senior year do well. We want to study how this information could inform our efforts to improve retention after the first year.

These questions will incorporate measures of a number of important student cohorts: men and women; residents and commuter; various racial/ethnic groups; and first generation students. There are four research questions on which we will focus.

Community Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Evidence/Methods/Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Diversity

Fostering community requires an understanding of the people who constitute our community. Whittier was founded on a principle of inclusiveness and diversity, and currently more than half of our student body is students of color. This richness of backgrounds, as well as
the social diversity that comes from drawing community members from a variety of economic and geographic groups matters to us partly because of our longstanding commitment to social justice. It also matters because we are committed to the belief that an education in a diverse setting best prepares students to comprehend and succeed in the world in which we live. Recent research shows that a diverse learning environment within the classroom leads to greater cognitive complexity for all students, and that prolonged contact, such as we have in our residential, liberal arts community, may have a stronger effect on cognitive complexity than does singular or intermittent contact. Putting our commitments into practice requires attention to both curricular development and co-curricular programming, and our work also has significant implications for recruiting and retention. Our early participation in the Equity Scorecard Project gives us data against which to benchmark the changes we have made and will make.

Our examination of diversity has three foils that derive from WASC’s statement on the dimensions for diversity in higher education:
1. What is the experience of various student cohorts at Whittier (i.e., representation)?
2. What is the effect of our diversity on our campus culture (i.e., the nature of campus community)?
3. Are we successfully providing the cultural competence we want our students to acquire (i.e., the impact of group membership on both individual development and the content of academic scholarship and study)?

As one of the most diverse colleges in the country, with a goal to be a pipeline for fields such those in STEM fields where there historically has been a low percentage of students of color, we want to ensure that there are no barriers to success. As a diverse Liberal Arts college, we believe strongly in the value of high impact practices (as defined by George Kuh and others). We want to ensure that students of all backgrounds benefit from all of these practices.

We examine the first two foils by gathering data from a variety of student cohorts: ethnic groups; residential/non-residential students; first generation college students; and transfer students. Both the experience of various student cohorts at Whittier and the effect of diversity feed into our questions that relate specifically to access and to student success.

To analyze cultural competence, we have chosen to focus our assessment specifically on our Cross-Cultural courses, that is, courses which explicitly compare two or more cultures, address global issues, or investigate transnational or trans-cultural currents. Our working definition encompasses those courses that examine two or more dimensions of human diversity and that consider these dimensions in terms of their social and/or cultural consequences. We want to analyze the impact of group membership on learning outcomes from these important courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. How and to what extent do faculty structure course syllabi and content to meet the learning needs of a diverse student population?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Connections

In addition to community and diversity, Whittier's tradition of interdisciplinary work reflects another aspect of the faculty and interconnected nature of reality. Interdisciplinarity also incorporates the Quaker tradition of a practical education, a tradition that is reflected in the College's long history of service-oriented academic programs, and of majors and programs that connect academic work with the necessity of functioning in the world outside and beyond the College. We educate through the particular, but we educate in, about, and for life in a much larger world, and our students need to learn this connection through putting it into practice while they are students.

The particular connections we propose to emphasize during our Self-Study are those involved in undergraduate research, or as we have phrased it, URSCA - undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity.

Whittier College is a community of learners engaged in ongoing collaboration with one another in and outside the classroom. This collaboration is transformative for the entire community. Our values of community, transformation, and collaboration are embodied by undergraduate research. Undergraduate Research should demonstrate critical thinking (the development of the skills and methods necessary for systematic investigation -- i.e., the ability to define, analyze, and synthesize using a variety of methods and technologies), the ability to translate skills and knowledge to domains and problems which are new to the student, and the practical application of knowledge in collaboration with a faculty mentor. Because Undergraduate Research is central to the learning outcomes identified by Whittier College, all students in all disciplines engage in Undergraduate Research through the Whittier Scholars Program's Senior Project, the Senior Presentation in the Major, or outside of the curriculum. Undergraduate research culminates in a peer-reviewed paper, publication, or presentation.

We understand that a fruitful undergraduate research experience should allow students to see the connections between the theoretical and the practical and provide essential knowledge in choosing a career path. The expanded definition reflects the different nature of and models for such work across the disciplines. The definition used by the Council on Undergraduate Research, "an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline," fits with this, but we recognize the need for further discussion and definition across campus.

Connections Theme

### Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Do URSCA experiences influence retention?</th>
<th>Evidence/Methods/Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of retention and graduation data for students with URSCA experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Do URSCA experiences influence career choices?</th>
<th>Departmental graduate plans data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Center alumni survey data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. How well is the senior presentation/paper in the major integrated with URSCA?</th>
<th>Departmental reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPC will be charged with this analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. How many students participate in URSCA activity on- and off-campus, and is that activity peer reviewed?</th>
<th>Key data collected on all URSCA experiences, including the nature of the evaluation of the experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E. How well is the faculty personnel process integrated into faculty-directed URSCA experiences?</th>
<th>EPC records and trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Handbook documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.i. Outcomes

Discuss the institution's intended specific outcomes for this stage of review, rather than a list of activities the institution plans to undertake. As with the CPR, these outcomes may be related to key issues and/or strategic themes.

Consistent with our goals for the entire process, as well as with each Theme, our outcomes should match the goals articulated above in Section B.1.

### 3.ii. Research Questions and Key Indicators

Indicate for each issue/theme, the institution's intended specific research questions, methods of inquiry, key indicators, and the specific groups that will be involved in the review process.

See discussion and tables in Section 3 for research questions and key indicators.

### 3.iii. Systems of Quality Assurance

Identify areas where institutional systems of quality assurance are to be reviewed and improved (e.g., program review processes, capstone courses, portfolio reviews) and incorporated into the Proposal.

Institutional systems of quality assurance are bled into Whittier College's committee structure and by the nature of the job description for our Associate Dean who oversees assessment. For example, our NSSE and other, Whittier-generated surveys on student satisfaction are reviewed by our Enrollment and Student Affairs Committee, which hosts faculty and staff members as well as by our Assessment Committee. Program review processes are analyzed at a number of levels: by the chair or director of the program, by the Dean of the Faculty, and by various committees to whom the program reviews are sent. Capstone course analyses are handled presently at the departmental level, but the writing portion of the capstone has not been as well analyzed as we needed. Our Writing Director has been tasked with establishing a sub-committee of the Educational Policies Committee to oversee the development of an instrument to assess senior writing projects. Our Associate Dean who handles assessment also examines data and the instruments we use to ensure quality assurance. Additionally, we are committed to repeating and refining surveys to ensure that our data is solid before we make changes. For example, three years ago, our Wabash study results reported that we did not score as high as we should have on classroom/faculty organization and clarity. The Associate Dean followed up by using the same questions on three times different internal surveys. On those, we received higher scores than we did on Wabash, and we were more confident in our results since we had larger survey samples.

### 3.iv. Rationale for Approach

Explain why the institution has proposed this particular approach to the EER; this rationale should flow from the institution's self-review under the Standards and analysis of the current state of its student learning outcomes assessment.

This EER flows out of our assessment reviews from seven to eight years ago when we established goals and assessment tools for our Liberal Education program. These assessment tools led us to establish our First Year Experience (FYE) program, and we began to assess the program, which gave us some preliminary assessment data, particularly for the writing aspects of the program. The FYE was part of a larger goal to address our retention issues, which have many facets: financial stability, educational quality, and following through on promises we make to students. (WASC Standards 1 and 2). Moreover, our mission to serve a diverse student body was a crucial factor for us. We addressed retention in our last review, and our data indicates that we have made progress. We believe that this progress is the result of investments in the FYE, including changes in curriculum, co-curricular, financial aid, and admissions strategies.

At the same time, we had begun to assess our academic and student life programs, augmenting such programs as Undergraduate Research. Undergraduate research is an important facet of our belief in "liberal learning" and with the opportunity to fill positions with new faculty, we were able to institute this paradigm that fits with our belief in the power of "connected learning." Thus, at this point, we are now ready to
complete an analysis of the FYE, and then to take this assessment to look at further retention issues that include issues of diversity and connections to the College. For this reason, we chose a Thematic Review process.

3.v. Reference to CFRs

Reference, where appropriate, the institution's self-review under the Standards and key Standards and Criteria for Review (CFRs) that will be emphasized in the EER.

We believe that Whittier’s EER will help the College in fulfilling our obligations under CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.9, 3.5, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, and 4.7.

3.vi. Student and Organizational Learning

Address specific plans for how the institution will review and improve student and organizational learning across the institution. The institution will also need to identify how it will review and evaluate actual student work and learning.

Whittier College is committed to creating a culture of evidence as witnessed in the degree of assessment and reflection that is currently ongoing. Assessment of student learning has moved beyond academics and has involved all of the academic support areas as well as Student Life. As the Accreditation process unfolds, and we begin our work on the CPR and the EER, the entire college will be drawn into discussions of student learning. Our primary goal will be to establish indicators and collect evidence to examine our themes comprehensively. This will be done even as we continue to examine student learning for our student population across majors and in their specific sub-populations. Many assessment practices have become part of our day-to-day practices and have helped us think in new ways about curriculum and pedagogy. We want this to remain a practice and we want to grow in our sophistication. The Teagle grant has allowed us to move assessment to a higher level and at a faster speed. The Argos software just purchased will provide faculty and staff with systematic and systemic data reports that will be able to inform the entire community. The Assessment Committee and the Associate Dean/Director of Assessment will provide a college-wide look at student learning that will facilitate the sharing of information across disciplines and division lines—helping with a broader and more inclusive college-wide approach.

More specifically, our themes have developed largely from our efforts to improve student learning across the institution. All three themes—Community, Diversity, and Connections—are attempts for Whittier College to assess student learning and to improve our institutional practices. All three themes will rely on the review and evaluation of actual student work—our Community theme will use Freshman writing to analyze one component of our research question on the academic component of the First Year Experience; our Diversity theme analysis is based extensively on the analysis of course syllabi and outcomes from our Culture courses; our Connections theme will use Senior Capstone papers as one element of our analysis of the relationship of senior projects and participation in URSCA. In terms of Organizational Learning, the development and preparation for the CPR has helped the institution to clarify goals for our Strategic Planning process that is just underway. This process, which includes two committees—one on academic excellence and the other on financial planning—is firmly anchored in our last WASC visit’s suggestion that educational goals be tied to financial ones. Specific outcomes for the EER will also be tied to financial planning.

C. Demonstrating a Feasible Plan of Work and Engagement of Key Constituencies

1. Workplan and Milestones

Either in this section or as part of the sections above, the Proposal should indicate for each stage how the work will be conducted, the organizational structures and processes to be used, and the key indicators that are likely to be included in the Institutional Proposal. Milestones and a statement of what will be accomplished by the time of the CPR and the EER should be provided. It is expected that the workplan for the EER will occur simultaneously with the preparation for the CPR rather than sequentially. This will allow for evidence, especially student learning results, and student portfolios and other work, to be reviewed, analyzed, discussed, and acted upon.

The following timeline represents our current plans for studying our three themes. Faculty, staff, and instees will work closely with the Dean of Faculty, the Assessment Committee, the Associate Dean for Assessment, the Associate dean of Faculty, IT Services, the Library, and outside consultants to move the process forward.

October 2007-October 2009

- Development of Themes
- Spring 2009: Dean of faculty appoints a WASC Steering Committee to work on the WASC proposal.
- Assessment Committee continues their efforts on assessment of learning outcomes.
  - Academic departments develop their annual assessment reports by September 2007. The process involves completion of final assessment reports that are submitted to the Assessment Committee by July for the respective year. Departments are expected to submit assessment plans for upcoming year by September of the respective year. All plans and reports are posted on the Moodle Page.
  - Spring of 2009: Department Reviews Begin. This will include bringing in outside evaluators and a review of the assessment by the joint subcommittee of the Assessment and Educational Policies committees
  - Moodle Page: Posting for all departments include their Mission, Goals, Learning Outcomes, Assessment Plans, Assessment
reports, Curriculum Maps, WASC Rubric and all data.
- May 2009: Assessment Retreat for all faculty and Student Life
- August 2009: Liberal Education Sub-Committee of the Assessment Committee completed final report for the assessment of Community 1. Report and supporting data posted on Moodle. This included assessment of the first year Writing Program.
- Teagle Grant:
  - Grant activities included data collection on Community Based Learning. Mission, Goals and Learning outcomes established. Assessment tool developed to measure learning outcomes. Plans are to use tool for data collection in the fall 2009 semester.
  - Argos software purchased and installed summer of 2009. Teagle grant committee met to begin planning for departmental reports. Key individuals attended training for Argos
  - Fall 2009 Assessment Committee reconvened.
  - Continue annual assessment plans for departments.
- Liberal Education sub-committee begins planning for the assessment of "Culture". Decide on consultant to help develop the plan and method for data collection.

May 2009-October 2009
- President appoints the WASC Steering Committee in consultation with the Dean of Faculty and Faculty Executive Council
- Faculty Executive Council appoints an enlarged Assessment Committee which has an overlap with the Steering Committee.
- President inaugurates a Strategic Planning process with Senior Staff that then meets with members of the faculty, staff, and Board to plan for next 5 years. Committees include one for Academic Programs and another for Financial Planning.
- The college hires an Assistant Dean to assist with assessment and institutional research.

October 2009-October 2010
- The WASC Steering Committee begins meetings and work on the CPR. The Steering Committee appoints subcommittees to work on the three themes (Community, Diversity, and Undergraduate Research).
- These subcommittees will develop methodologies for the assessment of the themes and will begin to collect data.
  - Assessment Committee—the Liberal Education Sub-Committee of the Assessment Committee presents findings on the assessment of Community to the Faculty. Revisions and changes made, re-assessment plans made.
  - The Liberal Education Sub-Committee of the Assessment Committee will begin assessment of the Culture component of the Liberal Education Program.
  - Departmental Assessment:
    - Continue with Annual Assessment Plans
    - Completion of Department Reviews for those academic departments scheduled for this year. This will include bringing in outside evaluators and a review of the assessment by the joint subcommittee of the Assessment and Educational Policies committees.
- Teagle Grant:
  - Spring 2009, Argos queries will be performed which will make data easily available to the various assessment subcommittees and to academic departments.
- Summer 2010:
  - Departmental Assessment continues with BOT oversight.

October 2010-October 2011
- WASC Steering Committee: Beginning analysis of data for the three themes. Continues work for completion of the CPR. A key focus will be final prep for the CPR in Fall 2011.
- Assessment Committee:
  - Completion of departmental assessment for those academic departments scheduled for this year. This will include bringing in outside evaluators and a review of the assessment by the joint subcommittee of the Assessment and Educational Policies committees.
  - Departments which completed their assessment the previous year will use the results for program changes as appropriate.
- Liberal Education Sub Committee completes data collection for the Culture component, analyzes data.
- Strategic Planning process continues with BOT oversight.

October 2011-October 2012
- Visiting team for CPR
- Completion of departmental assessment for those academic departments scheduled for this year. This will include bringing in outside evaluators and a review of the assessment by the joint subcommittee of the Assessment and Educational Policies committees.
- Departments which completed their assessment the previous year will use the results for program changes as appropriate.
- Data is assessed yearly by the Educational Planning Committee for review and action if needed.

October 2012-May 2013
- Completion of departmental assessment for each academic department scheduled for this year. This will include bringing in outside evaluators and a review of the assessment by the joint subcommittee of the Assessment and Educational Policies committees.
- Departments which completed their assessment the previous year will use the results for program changes as appropriate.
- Liberal Education Sub Committee of the Assessment Committee completes data analysis, writes report, and presents findings to the faculty recommending changes as needed.
- Liberal Education Subcommittee begins plans for next analysis of Liberal Education Program.
- Visiting team for EER in Spring 2013
2. Effectiveness of Data Gathering and Analysis Systems

This section should review the effectiveness of the institution’s data gathering and analysis systems for both undergraduate and graduate programs, especially those relating to the collection, dissemination and use of disaggregated retention data, student learning results, licensure examination results, job placement rates, graduate school acceptance rates, and other key outcomes data. The institution should indicate how these data gathering and analysis systems will be used, and as necessary, improved, to support internal institutional dialogue and a ‘culture of evidence’ throughout the accreditation review process and beyond.

Our two Associate Deans have major responsibilities for oversight of data collection and analysis. One Associate Dean of Faculty serves as our Director of Institutional Research, and he is responsible for the collection and dissemination of college data. In particular, he has developed a large data base used to analyze retention and graduation rate data. Using this large data base, he provides disaggregated data and analysis of these data to key members of the administration and to faculty committees on a regular basis as well as in response to particular questions. This Associate Dean is also responsible for production of the college Factbook, which has provided data for college constituencies for well over a decade. The college also uses IPEDS data in a variety of assessment areas. The Office of Career Planning conducts an annual survey of graduates to determine their future educational and career plans. We do not have a central source that tracks acceptance rates as these are kept by department. Our Associate Dean is working on doing this efficiently for our Pre-Med students. The college also uses NSSE data as an indicator of outcomes and success.

The Department of Education and Child Development, which is the seat of our MA in Education and of our teacher credentialing program, tracks student results on the CREST (California Basic Educational Skills Test), CSET (California Subject Examination for Teachers), RICA (Reading Instruction Competencies Assessment), and TPA (Teacher Performance Assessments), all of which are key part of the teacher credentialing process. The department uses these results as a part of their internal assessment of their programs. Data on completion of credentials is available through Banner searches and Title II annual reports.

The College’s Academic and Student Life divisions have an ongoing systemic process for departmental reviews (on a five year cycle). This entails departments developing learning outcomes that are linked to their mission as well as the College’s mission. Departments develop long range plans for assessment of learning outcomes so that all learning outcomes are assessed over a five year period and contribute to a culminating self-study. The Self Study is then used as the basis for curricular change and fiscal planning process. Evaluation of the Self Study/Department Reviews is done through a process that involves both the Educational Planning Committee and the Assessment Committee. This mechanisms for the PSC to gain a more in depth knowledge of all departments to help with a systemic understanding of departments’ needs and growth areas. The Assessment Committee itself is divided into two subcommittees, one for Liberal Education and the other that monitors Departmental Assessment. The Committee meets once monthly as one unit to keep both groups informed. The Liberal Education Committee plans the assessment of the Liberal Education Program. This is done in conjunction with departmental assessments so that departments can receive knowledge as well as provide knowledge about liberal education to inform each other’s assessments. Departments can choose to assess Liberal Education through the learning outcomes they establish for their programs.

All assessment is housed on our internal course page site, Moodle. This allows all departments at the college to examine and learn about the ongoing assessment endeavors and findings of each individual department as well as view their self studies. The Moodle site also allows for the second Associate dean who is also our Director of Assessment to monitor and provide feedback on all assessment documents posted on the Moodle site. One of the greatest advantages of this site is that it allows a college wide view of student learning. Departments are able to use each other’s data to support their own knowledge of student learning resulting in a true culture of evidence. The college’s self study will be informed by the various means of data gathering and interpretation on student learning.

The Law School collects and analyses data on bar passage rates by date of administration, by graduation cohort, and by ultimate pass rates for both California and out of state. They also collect retention and attrition data by transfer, involuntary (dismissals) and voluntary (walk-aways who did not designate themselves as transfers).

A key addition to the college’s assessment toolbox is the purchase of the Argos software package, which will allow the creation of reports which bring data from the college’s Banner computer system and from other sources (the Excel database on retention and NSSE data, for example) together in user-friendly reports. The college is in the process of hiring an Assistant Dean whose responsibilities will include writing Argos reports and providing support to both Associate Deans of the Faculty as they oversee the data gathering and assessment and manage the review process.

3. Commitment of Resources to Support the Accrediting Review

This section should describe how the institution will organize, oversee, and support the review process during its several stages. What human, technological and physical resources will be relied upon to support the accrediting review process? To what extent will the process be linked to ongoing institutional structures and priorities to increase value and reduce unnecessary work? Is there a budget for the process?

The review process will be under the guidance of a faculty/advisory steering committee chaired by the Dean of the Faculty/Vice President for Academic Affairs. This committee will ensure that the appropriate questions are being asked, that deadlines are being met, and will be responsible for the quality of the responses to WASC. The day-to-day management of the review process will be under the direction
of the dean of faculty, who will rely on the associate dean for assessment and associate dean of faculty/director of institutional research to provide the primary support and to work directly with faculty committees and academic and administrative departments. The college is also hiring an assistant dean who will work with the two associate deans on this project. The analysis of academic programs and of the college’s accreditation themes will be overseen by the faculty’s assessment committee, which has been assigned extra members for the duration of the accreditation process. In addition, several members of this committee also serve on the steering committee to provide a strong connection between these two bodies.

The college has developed a Moodle site as the key storage and communication area for assessment data. Since Moodle is also the primary program used for class management and teaching, the college is already providing support for Moodle and most members of the faculty are comfortable using it. Thus there is already a built-in level of comfort in using Moodle to coordinate assessment activities. We will be using the Argos software package, which was originally purchased by the development office for their own purposes, to provide user-friendly reports to all of the constituencies. The new assistant dean will be responsible for writing the Argos queries as well as for working with the two associate deans and other members of the college community to determine which reports will be the most valuable for assessment purposes.

The college has adequate computer, network, and data storage assets to support the assessment process, especially since we are having much of our software to double-duty. We do not plan to use facilities beyond what we already have available, which we believe are more than adequate to do the job we need to do.

A key part of our assessment work is that we are tying it directly into other work of the college. The Educational Policies Committee will be involved in reviewing assessment coming from the academic departments, so that this information will be available to that committee as we look at possible changes in academic programs. Additionally, the college is beginning a new round of strategic planning which will be tied directly to the outcomes of our assessment project.

The college maintains a regular budget line for accreditation and assessment in addition to having the position of associate dean with half of it’s time allocated to assessment and with a budget to support those efforts.

D. Presenting Appendices Connected to the Proposal

1. Data Exhibits

Include the set of Data Exhibits and the Summary Data Form for the Proposal. All data should be presented in the form of five-year historical trends. Throughout the Proposal, references to the institution’s analysis of these data, especially the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators and other appendices, should be made as appropriate.

Attachments

Whittier_Financial_Audit_2007-8.pdf,
WASC_Appendix_Summary_Data_form.pdf, Whittier_Financial_Audit_2006-7.pdf,
Organizational_chart--Whittier_College_Whittier-campus.pdf,
Organizational_chart_Whittier_Law_School.pdf, 2009-2011_Catalog.pdf,
Whittier_College_Institutional_Stipulation_Statement.pdf,
Required_Data_Exhibits_All_data_sets.pdf, Mission_Statement.pdf,
Whittier_College_list_of_academic_programs.pdf

2. Off-Campus and Distance Education Degree Programs

List all degree programs where 50 percent or more of the program is offered off-site (more than 25 miles from the home campus) or by distance learning. Describe how evaluation of these programs will be incorporated into the review process. Under Commission policy the accrediting process will need to include a review of distance education degree and off-campus programs. The body of the Proposal should indicate how these programs will be included in the institution's self review.

If not applicable, please indicate NA. If more space is required, attach an Excel spreadsheet with all required information.

List of Off-Campus and Distance Education (OCDE) Programs – N/A to Whittier College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program name and degree level</th>
<th>Modality*</th>
<th>Address, City, State, Zip, Country</th>
<th>FTE enrollment</th>
<th>Contact Person (if applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*for example: off-campus, blended/hybrid, distance education

3. Institutional Stipulations

Provide an Institutional Stipulation Statement signed by the Chief Executive Officer that establishes:

1. That the institution is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments, that it will engage in the process with seriousness and candor, that data presented are accurate and that the institutional Proposal will fairly present the institution.

2. That the institution has published and publicly available policies in force as identified by the Commission (See Appendix 1 in the Handbook of Accreditation). Such policies will be available for review on request throughout the period of accreditation. Special attention will be paid to the institution's policies and recordkeeping regarding complaints and appeals.

3. That the institution will abide by procedures adopted by the Commission to meet United States Department of Education (USDHE) procedural requirements (See Section VI in the Handbook of Accreditation).

4. That the institution will submit all regularly required data, and any data specifically requested by the Commission during the period of Accreditation (or Candidacy).

5. That the institution has reviewed its off-campus programs and distance education degree programs to ensure that they have been approved as required by the WASC Subsiantive Change process.

Conclusion

Proposal Review Process

Length of Proposal: Exclusive of Data Exhibits and Stipulations, as a guideline, the Institutional Proposal narrative (Sections A, B & C combined) should not exceed 10,000 words in length.

Review Process: Following submission, the Institutional Proposal is reviewed by a panel of the Proposal Review Committee (PRC), a peer review committee comprised of institutional and Commission representatives. The PRC is authorized to accept proposals that it believes will result in a review that can effectively demonstrate that an institution fulfills the two Core Commitments required for accreditation. Institutional representatives are invited to participate via conference call during that review process. In cases where the PRC has doubts that the Proposal will result in such a review process the Committee may request further information from the institution and/or may require revision and resubmission of the Proposal itself. At the conclusion of the review process, Commission staff will inform the institution that its Proposal has been accepted and that it can proceed with the review. The final copy of the Proposal is distributed to evaluation teams and the Commission. The current fees for the first and any subsequent Proposal submissions is found on the Commission website (www.wascsenior.org/institutionalproposal).

Changes After Acceptance. Once accepted, the Proposal may be further refined or modified during the accreditation process by mutual consent, or by the Commission following the CPR. This can occur, for example, once the institution is underway with implementation of the Proposal design, or upon the recommendation of the evaluation team following the CPR.

* Created with LiveText - livetext.com