Western University of Health Sciences
WASC Special Visit 2013 Report

WASC Special Visit Report
Prepared for the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Western University of Health Sciences
309 E. Second St., Pomona, CA 91766-1854
1/1/2013
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Introduction

This report summarizes findings from Western University of Health Sciences’ (WesternU) self-study for the WASC March 2013 Special Visit. In this report, we review our activities in response to recommendations outlined in the March 2010 WASC Action Letter (Appendix 1) and the Report of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) Visiting Team (Appendix 2). As with previous self-inquiries, we aim to discuss our progress, as well as our struggles, openly and in good faith. In the end, we feel there has been a good deal of movement in each of the areas identified as weaknesses a few years ago. Our work has stimulated important conversations about WesternU’s effectiveness and offered insights on how we can sustain the positive momentum that has been built over the years.

WesternU Overview and Updates

“To produce, in a humanistic tradition, healthcare professionals and biomedical knowledge that will enhance and extend quality of life in our communities.”

History

Western University of Health Sciences (WesternU) is a graduate institution of higher education with a focus on health sciences and the health professions. Established in 1977 by Philip Pumerantz (Founding President) as the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (COMP), the school began very modestly on the day after Labor Day in a rented room in an old store, with borrowed furniture and a telephone. In January 1978, COMP received pre-accreditation status from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA). Provisional accreditation status was attained in July 1978, just before COMP welcomed its charter class of 36 students later that fall. COMP received formal accreditation from the AOA in February 1982.

The evolution from a single college to a university began in 1986 with the addition of the Master of Science in Health Professions Education program. In 1990, the Physician Assistant program opened its doors, followed by the Physical Therapy program two years later. Having established the College of Allied Health Professions to house its three newest programs, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) granted COMP accreditation in March 1996. With WASC accreditation in place, the institution was renamed Western University of Health Sciences in August 1996.

Growth of a University

Certainly, WesternU is unique in higher education for the length of term of its Founding President, and for the circumstances from which the institution emerged. Moreover, during President Pumerantz’ tenure, WesternU has grown into one of the most comprehensive health sciences institutions in the nation. Grounded by its founding principle of Humanism, WesternU currently consists of nine colleges, with 14 distinct degree programs and over 3,600 students. To date, WesternU has trained and graduated nearly 10,000 students in disciplines such as osteopathic medicine, health professions education, physician assistant studies, physical therapy, nursing, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, and biomedical, pharmaceutical, and medical sciences.
Furthermore, programs in optometry, dental medicine, and podiatric medicine, which opened their doors to students in 2009, are set to graduate their inaugural classes in spring 2013.

The primary WesternU campus is located in downtown Pomona on approximately 18 acres, along a five-block corridor that was once home to a 1950s era mall. Over a 35-year period, the University has gradually occupied more buildings, purchasing most and leasing others. Since 2009, WesternU has constructed three new buildings on the Pomona campus to provide needed space for its growing programs. In addition, WesternU recently embarked on its first major clinical services venture by building an on-campus multidisciplinary patient care center in 2010. In total, these four new facilities added approximately 265,000 square feet of usable space to the WesternU campus.

More recently, WesternU launched a remote Osteopathic Medicine program in Lebanon, Oregon. Opened in fall 2011, COMP-NW (COMP-NW Website) is an expansion of the COMP-Pomona campus, following the same curriculum of the parent program. The COMP-NW campus is situated on the 50-acre Samaritan Campus Center, adjacent to the Lebanon Community Hospital, and operates from a 55,000-square-foot medical education and research building constructed in 2011. In fall 2012, COMP-NW welcomed its second cohort of students, giving them just over 200 in total.

Without a doubt, WesternU has undergone tremendous growth over the past several years. Expansion, however, has not been limited to the addition of formal degree programs and infrastructure. It has also leveraged its wide-ranging mixture of health professions programs to develop an Interprofessional Education (IPE) program, which was launched at WesternU in 2010. This program, which does not lead to a degree, provides an opportunity for all WesternU students to sit with, and learn from, each other. The primary goal of the program is to inform WesternU students about other health professions and, by extension, their professional role within the larger health system. Fundamentally, the IPE programs promote a team approach to patient care and healthcare management. From an institutional perspective, the IPE program brings together faculty and students under one umbrella and a common goal.

Other Developments

- WesternU began an institutional strategic planning initiative in 2011. The process is being led by Vice Provost Sheree Aston and is ongoing. Details of the strategic planning initiative are outlined later in the report.
- Dr. Gary Gugelchuk was appointed Provost and Chief Operating Officer in February 2012. Dr. Gugelchuk has served WesternU for more than 25 years (most recently as Senior Vice Provost). In addition to his primary function, Dr. Gugelchuk retains his role of Accreditation Liaison Officer to WASC.
- Programs in Optometry, Podiatric Medicine, and Dental Medicine welcomed their fourth cohorts in fall 2012. The College of Podiatric Medicine was granted formal accreditation from the Council on Podiatric Medical Education in November of 2012 (Appendix 3). The College of Dental Medicine (Appendix 4) and College of Optometry (Appendix 5) will have the final site visit in early 2013 and are on track to receive formal accreditation next year.
The Master of Science in Medical Sciences program is a post-baccalaureate program intended to provide students with the necessary skills to pursue evidence-based practice. This program was approved by the WASC Commission in May 2010 and does not pursue professional accreditation. As part of our preparation for the upcoming special visit, we prepared a supplemental report responding to the Commission’s concerns on Faculty Workload, Advising and Academic Support, and Outcomes (Appendix 6).

WASC Commission Concerns

WesternU’s accreditation was reaffirmed by WASC in March 2010. In the reaffirmation letter, WesternU was commended by the WASC Commission for its commitment to humanistic care, the development of an interprofessional program, its use of technological advances aimed at improving student learning, its plans to recruit underrepresented students, and the commitment of faculty and staff to student learning and success. The commission also recognized the work done at WesternU in the area of student learning, and specifically the development of learning outcomes at the program and institutional level.

In the reaffirmation letter, the WASC Commission also outlined five areas of concern, which led directly to the upcoming special visit. These concerns included:

- Development of program review
- Moving to the next level on student learning assessment
- Building a culture of evidence
- Planning and providing resources for institutional change and growth
- Faculty governance

Examination of these five topics reveals many commonalities and interconnections. The topic of culture of evidence, which refers to WesternU’s difficulties with using data to drive decision making, overlaps considerably with concerns surrounding program review, student learning assessment, and to some degree, planning for institutional growth. More broadly, the issues appear to speak to a lack of transparency and accountability, whether between faculty and administration or between programs and the University. They speak to underdeveloped roles and processes, especially those meant to align the University with its various programs and colleges.

In WesternU’s January 2010 response to the report of the EER visiting team (Appendix 7), President Pumerantz acknowledged that WesternU was “a group of almost-autonomous colleges.” Stated another way, the weaknesses outlined by the WASC commission speak to the relative absence of an institutional identity that is separate from the individual colleges and programs contained within. Efforts such as the development of the eight institutional outcomes, modifications to the Academic Senate, the initiation of program review, and the Interprofessional Program have done a lot to help establish university processes that reach beyond program boundaries. Yet, we recognize that at the time of the site visit, these processes were in their initial stages.

All in all, concerns identified by the Commission cannot be addressed overnight. Fundamentally, they require a shift in the culture that needs to be planned and executed carefully. However, this is not to say that progress has not been made. To the contrary, we feel that we have made a good deal of headway in the 32 months since the most recent reaffirmation
cycle concluded. Much of the groundwork for change has been put in place, and implementation of numerous initiatives has begun.

**Approach to WASC Special Visit**

Formal preparation for the spring 2013 WASC Special Visit began in August 2010 with the formation of the WASC Special Visit Steering Committee. Assembled by Dr. Gugelchuk, the charge of this committee was to guide the preparation of the special visit by providing a forum for discussing and implementing recommendations outlined at the conclusion of WesternU’s most recent accreditation cycle.

Careful consideration was placed on panel membership in an effort to achieve the proper diversity of skills and backgrounds, and to maximize engagement on the topic (Appendix 8). The committee was chaired by the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, who has been at WesternU since 2005. Other members included WesternU’s Assessment Analyst, as well as members of Information Technology, Human Resources, and the Business Office. College representation was comprised of two faculty members, including the Chair of the Academic Senate, and three academic program administrators.

The entire WesternU community was given an opportunity to participate in the WASC Special Visit Review in one form or another. During the self-study process, survey data were obtained from students, faculty, administrators, and the Board of Trustees. Upon completion of the first draft of each panel report, the Board of Trustees, President, Provost, administrators, faculty, students, and staff were invited to give feedback via an electronic form. Overall, 12 responses were received through the online form; six responses were from students, three from staff, one from faculty, and two from administrators. The feedback was reviewed and changes were incorporated where appropriate.

**Report Structure**

The remainder of this report is divided into four chapters. In the next section, we reflect on the issue of Culture of Evidence. Within this section, we discuss institutional reporting, program review, and assessment of student learning outcomes. In the following section, we discuss strategic planning and growth, followed by faculty governance. Each of these sections makes up the bulk of our response to recommendations from the most recent WASC review. The final chapter reflects on key findings from each chapter and consolidates these outcomes from the institutional perspective.
Culture of Evidence

Introduction

The WASC Commission identified the need for WesternU to improve its ability to use data to drive decision making. This concern encompasses access to and utilization of both institutional and assessment-related data. For instance, in the reaffirmation letter, the WASC Commission indicated that WesternU needs to “further develop faculty and administrative expertise” so that they can support assessment of student learning activities. The commission also quoted the EER visiting team’s finding that data at WesternU are “difficult to retrieve and analyze.” One of the primary causes outlined by the visiting team was the lack of a systematic and centralized institutional research structure. This model, it was suggested, hinders accessibility to data and encourages institutional units to operate autonomously.

Looking back, the depiction of WesternU’s data reporting model made by the WASC visiting team was accurate. For instance, while much of WesternU’s institutional data is stored in Banner, the various data modules are overseen by institutional data custodians in units such as Information Technology (IT), the Registrar, Human Resources, and the Business Office. Moreover, WesternU’s Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IRE) historically acted as a data collector, and did not have the capabilities to directly retrieve institutional data that are typical in many institutions.

The situation with the assessment culture was similar. At the time of the site visit, little data had been gathered on WesternU’s eight institutional outcome domains. The program review process, which includes an assessment section, was in the early stages. There was no system that brought programs under the WesternU umbrella for assessment. The reality was that programs continued to operate independently, viewing assessment and program review primarily through the standpoint of their professional field and driven by professional accreditation.

On the whole, these limitations have received considerable attention since the conclusion of the previous reaffirmation cycle. The current section outlines processes implemented to better establish and promote a culture of evidence at WesternU. In the context of the current report, this has implications for IRE and its ability to facilitate and promote the use of data of all kinds. It also extends to program review and assessment, as well as the capacity of WesternU faculty and administration to sustain these processes.

Moreover, given the degree to which a culture of evidence intersects with assessment and program review, all three topics are discussed in this chapter. We begin by discussing the measures we have taken to augment our reporting capabilities. Subsequent sections provide updates for program review and assessment at WesternU.

Institutional Reporting

Institutional Research and Effectiveness

The core mission of WesternU’s IRE office is to provide rigorous, useful information and analysis to units on campus in order to assist with quality improvement. Currently, IRE administers two annual student surveys (i.e. First-year and Program Completion) and manages the Board of Trustees Quarterly Reporting Process. IRE also compiles and maintains WesternU’s Outcomes website (CFR 1.2, 2.10) and reports institutional data to outside agencies.
such as WASC, IPEDS, and college guidebook organizations. In addition, IRE fulfills ad hoc requests as needed.

According to the most recent Board of Trustees Report, the IRE office completed 129 individual reports in the 2012 fiscal year, up from 80 two years prior (Appendix 9). This figure represents assistance with collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data for both academic and university branches of the institution. Recent examples include developing a report for Student Affairs to gauge demand for on-campus housing (Appendix 10), assisting the College of Veterinary Medicine with their regular alumni surveys, and administering administrator evaluations for the College of Pharmacy.

IRE also plays a central role in outcomes assessment activities and program review at WesternU. The director of IRE currently chairs the Assessment/Program Review Committee and advises programs on institutional assessment requirements. In the past, IRE worked with all WesternU programs to develop matrices to align program learning outcomes with courses and with the eight institutional outcomes. This work helped lay the foundation for the development and execution of WesternU’s annual assessment process.

Nevertheless, despite the level of production sustained by the IRE office, we recognize that there is room for improvement. For instance, the decentralized nature of data reporting at WesternU, which was mentioned by the WASC EER visiting team, was a considerable hindrance to attempts to establish a culture of evidence. As a result, IRE has spearheaded several actions to remedy the situation.

**IRE Reorganization**

To enhance IRE’s ability to meet its goals, the office was recently reorganized. At the time of the WASC visit, IRE consisted of the director, an administrative assistant, and three (undifferentiated) research analysts. This relatively flat structure led to roles that were not clearly defined. This, in turn, led to inefficiencies and, to some degree, confusion, both within the unit and from the outside looking in.

To create a more functional organizational structure, the roles of the three research analysts were redefined to give them more focus. An assessment analyst (Appendix 11) role was created to help support assessment and program review activities. A senior assessment analyst (Appendix 12) position was created, which includes responsibilities for faculty development related to assessment and student learning outcomes. The remaining analyst roles (FTE = 1.5) were preserved with responsibilities for internal and external reporting. Finally, a programmer analyst was hired to help IRE extract data from WesternU’s institutional database (Appendix 13).
We expect these modifications and additions to have numerous benefits. Defining specialized roles will make it more likely for staff members to take ownership of their work. Staff will develop their skillsets more quickly and more efficiently, fostering their ability to become experts in a domain. Moreover, the addition of a programmer analyst provides a skillset that was previously lacking in the IRE office. Ultimately, we feel that the IRE office is better prepared to support and promote data-driven decision making throughout the campus.

**Data Standards Team**

An institutional Data Standards Team was formed (Appendix 14) to oversee and maintain the integrity of data stored in Banner. The group, chaired by the Director of IRE, is composed of university and academic staff and faculty, and will play an integral role in centralizing reporting processes at the institution. Among the specific duties of the Data Standards Team are outlining WesternU’s reporting infrastructure, maintaining institutional data standards and policies, and establishing a central repository to house this information. The Data Standards Team’s first meeting occurred in November 2012. Among the initial undertakings of the group is the development of a strategic reporting plan that will identify users of WesternU’s reporting institutional database. The group is currently working on a plan to review the current state of reporting; the review will include an evaluation of reporting needs, strengths, and weaknesses.

**Banner Reports**

WesternU’s IT department has developed a number of standard and custom reports in our institutional database (Banner) that can be accessed by data custodians throughout campus. A recent poll of custodians revealed that many were not aware of what was available to them. As a result, IRE partnered with IT to create a Banner Report Information list, now available through the University’s portal. This list displays all existing Banner standard and custom reports, the functional role of who should have access to them, a detailed description of what the report displays, a link for users to check their current access, and a description and/or instruction on where (i.e. what system) to run the report. In addition, we added a link to request access or more
information. Moving forward, this resource webpage will be maintained by the Data Standards Team.

**Operational Data Store/Cognos**

Historically, Banner has acted as both the transactional and the reporting database at WesternU. This setup can be problematic, especially as reporting demands increase in frequency and complexity. Moreover, nearly all custom reports at WesternU are generated by programmers housed in the IT department or the registrar. This arrangement has led to a number of inefficiencies, the most notable of which is a relatively long turnaround time to get data to those that need it.

To help produce a more nimble process, WesternU purchased an Operational Data Store (ODS) to act as the primary institutional reporting database. The ODS complements (rather than replaces) Banner by housing a copy of Banner data that is structured in a flattened way (i.e. removing the necessity of creating complicated table joins). We expect that the introduction of the ODS will lead to a number of improvements in our reporting capabilities. For instance, reporting out of the ODS reduces the strain on Banner, which allows it to function at optimal performance. In addition, the ODS applies common descriptor names to data fields, making it easier for end users to understand what data fields represent. Finally, the ODS will allow us to bring together data from various data systems under one structure.

In a strict sense, the primary purpose for the ODS is to process and store data. In and of itself, the ODS is not a data retrieval tool. To facilitate this process, the University purchased Cognos, which is powerful end-user query software that enables users to retrieve data, assemble reports, and create and deliver dashboards using drag and drop methods. Ultimately, the addition of Cognos will permit direct access to selected (non-technical) users to create ad hoc reports.

Permissions for the ODS will be governed by the Data Standards Team and outlined in the Strategic Reporting Plan. The IRE programmer is currently working with the IT department to reconcile the ODS with Banner so that the new system can become functional. Training of ODS/Cognos users is scheduled to begin in early 2013.

**IRE Newsletter**

To help promote a culture of evidence at WesternU, the IRE office launched a newsletter in June 2012. Titled *Descriptives*, the newsletter is to be delivered to the WesternU community on a semianual basis. The first issue included biographical sketches of the IRE office staff, an overview of services the office provides, and updates on accreditation and other IRE-related news items. Data and analysis of data relevant to WesternU will be a regular part of the newsletter. Ultimately, *Descriptives* will serve as a vehicle for informing and educating our constituents, providing updates, and promoting the use of data.

**Outcomes Website**

Since 2009, the IRE office has maintained WesternU’s Outcomes website, which contains institutional and college-level data on enrollment, graduation rates, and licensure results. Graduation rates (CFR 2.10) are divided by gender, ethnicity, area of residency (CA, Other West, Other U.S., Non-resident), and financial aid status (Loan vs. Non-loan recipient).
More recently, the IRE office has begun to develop an assessment webpage that will be part of the Outcomes website. The site will house assessment tools (such as rubrics and templates), an assessment glossary, and links to assessment-related news.

**IRE Annual Surveys**

The IRE office administers Program Completion and First-year Student surveys each year. The primary purpose of these surveys is to garner feedback on student satisfaction with WesternU’s support services (such as the library, financial aid office, and student affairs). In addition, the program completion survey includes items that evaluate WesternU’s eight institutional learning outcome domains. Response rates in recent years have ranged from 50 percent to 70 percent, which is fairly high for surveys of this type.

Survey data are compiled by IRE and formal reports are distributed to each program in the fall of each year. The reports are primarily descriptive in nature. Supplemental analyses that evaluate differences along important demographic variables (such as ethnicity and gender) are conducted, as appropriate (CFR 2.10).

Completed reports are forwarded to program administrators with an invitation to sit down and discuss results in person. IRE encourages program administrators to closely evaluate the results of each survey, and welcomes follow-up analysis for any program administrators who are interested. During the last two years, the Director of IRE also presented findings to WesternU’s Operations Group and the Deans’ Council. In addition to a basic overview of report outcomes, IRE conducts analyses regularly to evaluate any differences by gender, ethnicity, and other noteworthy demographic indicators.

**BOT Reports: Board of Trustees Quarterly Reporting**

To help monitor performance, WesternU’s academic programs and institutional operations units submit up to four reports to the Board of Trustees per year (CFR 2.10, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4). Coordinated by IRE, reports are data-driven, providing the Board of Trustees and WesternU units with insight into key performance indicators. To help place the data into context, programs/units include narratives in most reports, as requested. Narratives are expected to include a critical evaluation and responses to data within the report, and also allow programs/units to indicate short-term strategic goals.

BOT reports are submitted on a quarterly basis, in advance of the Board of Trustees meetings occurring in March, May, August, and November (recently moved from December). Academic programs submit reports for all four meetings, while the majority of operations units submit a report for the November meeting. BOT reports cover topics such Program Outcomes (Appendix 15), Scholarly Productivity (Appendix 16), Admissions (Appendix 17), and Capacity and Growth (Appendix 18). A summary of data contained within each report can be seen in Table 1 below:
Table 1. Summary of quarterly BOT reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Program Outcomes</td>
<td>Graduation data by gender, ethnicity, region of origin, and financial aid status; Licensure passing rates; Employment analysis; Response to graduating student report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Scholarly Productivity</td>
<td>Number of articles and book chapters published; Number of presentations; Grant activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td>Number of applicants, interviewed, offered, and admitted by gender, ethnicity, and region of origin; GPA for applicants interviewed, offered, and admitted, by gender, ethnicity, and region of origin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Capacity and Growth</td>
<td>Five-year annual budget; Five-year data on staff and faculty; Previous breakdown of faculty by gender, ethnicity, and academic rank; Student to faculty, student to staff, and faculty to support staff ratios.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Steps

WesternU’s newly formed Data Standards team will begin an internal scan of WesternU’s reporting environment in January 2013. Among the goals of the scan are to gauge WesternU unit/program data needs, explore strengths and weaknesses of our current reporting procedures, and identify any orphan databases in use that may compromise the reliability of WesternU data. Information gathered will assist in the development of an institutional reporting plan that will improve data integrity and accessibility by eliminating confusion about where to find data, and will produce appropriate custom reports for data custodians. The IRE office programmer continues his work on reconciling the ODS and Banner to ensure that they function properly. Once we are more comfortable with the ODS system, the IRE office will begin to work with University executives to create simple, but informative, data dashboards. Included in these plans are dashboards looking at student attrition, faculty and employee turnover, and application data.
Program Review

History

Over the past several years, WASC consistently identified academic program review as an area in need of improvement at WesternU. Unlike traditional undergraduate institutions, the majority of WesternU programs are accredited by professional accrediting agencies (in addition to the institution’s regional accreditation). Presently, 8 of 14 WesternU programs hold formal professional accreditation. Newer programs in Optometry and Dental Medicine are currently in candidacy status, and are on track to receive formal accreditation in 2013.

The custom at WesternU has been to rely on that professional accreditation as a form of program review. However, WASC requires that institutions manage their own internal program review process. Following the Capacity and Preparatory (CPR) visit in 2008, WesternU acknowledged that it was responsible for creating an institutional program review process. A new process was drafted, and the first institutional program review, for the MS in Health Sciences Education program, was under way during the EER visit in 2009.

The EER visiting team observed, “Though an adequate protocol appears to have been developed, evidence of a mature system or process is lacking.” It was unclear to the team members how the program review process and the existing professional accreditation cycles would be related. The team recommended that the development and implementation of the program review process be accelerated.

In response, a team of WesternU faculty and administrators participated in the WASC Program Review Workshop in Long Beach, California. Shortly afterwards, a university-wide Assessment/Program Review Committee, composed of college Deans’ nominees, was convened. Initially chaired by the Director of Outcomes Assessment and Interprofessional Education Research, the committee began monthly meetings in March 2010 to address outstanding university-wide assessment questions, critique and approve the new program review process, and advise and consult as peers on assessment practices between colleges.

With the help of the committee, the program review process was revised and expanded to address the weaknesses previously identified and to assure alignment with the WASC rubric for program review. The first revision was completed in June 2010 and amended several times, based on internal feedback. The process and a University program review policy were presented to the Academic Senate in January 2011 for its approval.

WesternU’s Program Review Overview

WesternU’s program review process was developed by using examples gathered in the Outcomes-Based Program Review Workshop (conducted February 25-26, 2010 in Long Beach, CA) and principles developed by the Council of Graduate Schools and published in Assessment and Review of Graduate Programs. Program review occurs no more frequently than every five years for any program, and consists of the following six milestones (see Table 2):
Table 2. WesternU Program Review Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Planning and Preparation</td>
<td>Kickoff meeting; establish timeline, roles and responsibilities. Program review training. Integration plan for professional accreditation. Budget allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Research</td>
<td>Standard data and reports from service units. Additional research planned, as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Self-Study</td>
<td>Self-study report developed. Crosswalk of accreditation report with WesternU standards (if applicable). Formative feedback on draft reports. Involvement of cross-section of stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  External Review</td>
<td>Accreditation visit, external visit, or readers’ panel organized by WesternU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Internal Review</td>
<td>Visit results reviewed by Academic Affairs. Development of MOU and action plan to address goals set by review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Annual Follow-Up</td>
<td>Joint review by program administration and Academic Affairs. Update of MOU and progress on action plan recorded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the 2009 site visit, WesternU’s program review process has improved in several ways. For instance, in response to the Commission’s concern, the updated guidelines more clearly outline the link between program review and professional accreditation. Program review cycles are staggered, based in part on the timetable of accreditation for professionally accredited programs. In these cases, the review may conclude immediately prior to, simultaneous with, or immediately after the culmination of the professional accreditation process.

To minimize duplication, we make use of professional accreditation materials where they overlap with the University’s standards for program review. Programs have the option to modify their submission to ensure that WesternU’s program review standards are addressed adequately. If available, results of professional accreditation (such as visiting team reports and action letters) may also be included as part of the program review analysis.

Standards for program review are better defined in the current process. Consistent with best practices, standards include an evaluation of mission and history, student learning outcomes data, curricular offerings, faculty, the student body, physical facilities, staff, and an assessment of the external environment. Generally speaking, the process is primarily focused on the achievement of student learning outcomes and on the activities and resources that support learning.

In 2011, the review guidelines were amended to incorporate co-curricular programs. With a few exceptions, the review process for academic and co-curricular programs is the same. In terms of the program review standards, however, there may be instances where they do not align perfectly with a co-curricular program’s configuration (e.g., no faculty). In these situations, co-curricular program leaders, in consultation with the Chair of the
Assessment/Program Review Committee, provide a supplement that details how these standards will be addressed.

In light of the WASC Commission’s concern about developing faculty and administrative expertise, the intention was to create a process that is very inclusive. We expect faculty to be very involved in the review of academic programs, and recommend the development of a representative team to lead the self-study for larger programs. We also build competence during the review phase, where a WesternU readers’ panel, along with the professional accreditation team (if applicable), provides the external review.

Overview of Program Reviews

To date, three WesternU programs have completed the program review process. The review of the MS in Health Sciences Education program was completed in 2010 (Appendix 19). The reviews of the MS in Physician Assistant Studies (Appendix 20) and MS in Pharmaceutical Sciences (Appendix 21) began in fall 2010 and were completed in spring 2011. The Physician Assistant Studies program review was the first review to formally integrate the internal review process with the program’s external professional accreditation cycle. The table below consolidates the recommendations and status for the three programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSHS</td>
<td>• Assessment; Due 10/1/10</td>
<td>• Assessment: Critical thinking data collected from 2009-2011; Rubric revised to provide succinct indicators of student learning outcomes; Participation in WesternU assessment of institutional learning outcomes (Appendix 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Track current employment status of program graduates; Due 10/1/10</td>
<td>• Tracking graduates: 2009-2011 data collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Action plan; Due 6/15/10</td>
<td>• Action plan: Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New self-study; Due 6/30/15</td>
<td>• Self-study: In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interprofessional research relationships</td>
<td>• Interprofessional research relationships: In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPA</td>
<td>• Assessment</td>
<td>• Assessment: Participation in WesternU assessment of institutional learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Syllabi; Due 6/30/13</td>
<td>• Syllabi: Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPS</td>
<td>• Assessment; Due 6/30/14</td>
<td>• Assessment: Participation in WesternU assessment of institutional learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Syllabi; Due 6/30/13</td>
<td>• Syllabi: In development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Admission policies; Due 12/31/11</td>
<td>• Admission policies: Processes in place to 1) Capture the criteria faculty use to accept students, 2) Analyze applicant pre-admission data, 3) Conduct inferential analysis of applicant data to successful admitted student data to serve as “predictor for success”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Program review recommendations and status of completion.
Scheduled to be completed next are program reviews for Veterinary Medicine (CVM), Pharmacy (COP), and Student Clubs. The Director of IRE, who is the current chair of the Assessment/Program Review Committee, met with program directors in each of these programs in 2012. Given that CVM and COP will conclude their respective professional accreditation processes in early 2013, we have set a due date of April 1, 2013 for each program to submit its program review self-study. This timeline should allow each program to submit professional accreditation visit team reports and action letters along with its self-study. The program review of Student Clubs is due July 15, 2013.

Review of Student Clubs

In its reaffirmation letter, the WASC Commission specifically commented on WesternU’s lack of evaluation of learning and effectiveness for the co-curricular programs. To address this issue, the Assessment/Program Review Committee has begun to add co-curricular programs to the schedule of program reviews. As mentioned earlier, student clubs are currently undergoing review, with a self-study due date in July 2013.

This process was delayed, in part, because an initial inquiry deemed that student clubs were not sufficiently prepared to undergo formal program review. Until recently, Student Affairs, which oversees WesternU clubs, did not have formal learning outcomes for clubs. There were also questions about the appropriateness of WesternU’s program review guidelines, and how to apply them to student clubs and other co-curricular programs. Finally, outcomes assessment was a relatively new concept for both the Director of Student Clubs and the VP of Student Affairs. While some data were collected from clubs on an annual basis, it was unclear whether this information would allow for assessment of effectiveness.

To help bridge the gap, the Director of IRE, the VP of Student Affairs, and the Director of Student Clubs worked together to fill in the missing pieces. Over the course of several months, with input from student clubs and the Assessment/Program Review Committee, learning outcomes were developed (Appendix 23). WesternU’s program review guidelines, which previously applied only to academic programs, were amended. Finally, strategies for generating assessment data were discussed.

As of now, the program review of Student Clubs is on schedule. The Director of IRE met with representatives from Student Affairs in July 2012 to discuss parameters, answer questions, and offer suggestions.

Next Steps

Over the next few years, we expect the program review process to continue to evolve. We recently added the library and the IPE program to the program review calendar. The addition of other co-curricular Student Affairs and student services programs to the schedule will also be considered. To further solidify the role of the Program Review/Assessment Committee, a proposal to add its charge to the Faculty Handbook was submitted to the Senate in summer 2012. This proposal is currently under consideration and should be resolved by summer 2013. We are also committed to evaluating the review process to ensure that it is working properly. Recent feedback from the Chair of the Physician Assistant program revealed that there was some confusion during the review, as instructions for the process were not always clear. The Program Review/Assessment Committee is developing all the necessary templates and rubrics, as well as
refining the process to maximize clarity. In the end, we understand that putting a program review in place is just the first step. WesternU’s program review process is still in the early stages, and we need to take the time to monitor its effectiveness.

Assessment

**WASC Assessment Leadership Academy**

In January 2012, Juan Ramirez (Director of IRE) completed the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy (ALA). This year-long undertaking brings together professionals of all ranks, representing schools from across the WASC region, to learn strategies for supporting assessment at their institution. ALA participants take part in assessment workshops and consult with national experts and with each other. The academy was led by WASC consultants Mary Allen and Amy Driscoll, two major players in the assessment field. In addition, national experts on assessment, including Peter Ewell and Trudy Banta, also participated. Assessment approaches learned at the ALA greatly influenced WesternU’s assessment process.

**History**

In 2007, a team of WesternU faculty, staff, and administrators came together to look at student learning outcomes assessment at WesternU. At the conclusion of the process, the team identified eight institutional student learning outcome domains that cut across each of WesternU’s programs ([WesternU Outcomes](#)). These domains consist of 1) Critical Thinking, 2) Breadth and Depth of Knowledge in the Discipline/Clinical Competence, 3) Interpersonal Communication, 4) Collaboration Skills, 5) Ethical and Moral Decision Making, 6) Life-Long Learning, 7) Evidence-Based Practice, and 8) Humanism.

Following the Educational Effectiveness Review visit in 2009, the WASC Commission commended WesternU for the work the team did to create institutional outcomes. Nevertheless, the Commission also requested that that WesternU show progress on the assessment of institution-level student learning outcomes and improvements in analysis, interpretation, and use of assessment data at all levels. Up to that point, assessment occurred almost exclusively at the program level, with little acknowledgement of the institutional learning outcomes. Based on these recommendations, the Assessment/Program Review Committee began to explore ways to implement an assessment process for WesternU’s institutional learning outcomes.

The first step was the implementation of a pilot study, whereby a single institutional learning outcome (Interpersonal Communication) was chosen for thorough investigation. Over the course of a year, program curriculum and assessment leaders were interviewed for the purpose of gathering information about interpersonal communication. Curricular maps, which had been created a year earlier, were examined to identify how and where Interpersonal Communication could be assessed. Flow charts diagramming where and how each program assessed Interpersonal Communication were created (Appendix 24). In the end, this process verified that there were extensive assessment opportunities related to interpersonal communication in each program.

Following the completion of the pilot study on interpersonal communication, the Program Review/Assessment committee began to create a plan to assess all eight institutional learning outcome domains. We wanted to create a process that was effective, but also sustainable. Based
in large part on lessons learned from the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy, as well the 2011 WASC conference in Long Beach, CA, a tentative assessment plan was drafted in October 2011 with three basic attributes:

- Assessment of WesternU’s institutional learning outcomes would occur on a four-year cycle, with programs submitting an assessment report on two outcomes per year.
- Direct assessment evidence should come from signature assignments, which are comprehensive and representative instances of student work related to one or more outcomes.
- Programs should operationalize assessments using program learning outcomes to maximize the meaning of their work.

To make expectations explicit, an institutional assessment report template was drafted in November 2011. The template outlines step-by-step instructions to ensure that reports contained all the important elements of assessment. The template included assessment goals, identification and analysis of direct evidence of student learning (i.e., student work), and thoughtful discussion of results and their implications. We also asked programs to clearly specify who was involved in the assessment process and how each person/group contributed. Ultimately, the aim was to create a process that would stimulate a participatory assessment culture, where programs reflect on and widely share their results.

To help judge the feasibility of completing the assessment template, a sample report on Interpersonal Communication was generated using data supplied by the Master of Science in Medical Sciences (MSMS) program. The signature assignment chosen as evidence by the MSMS program was a poster presentation, which included data on four aspects of communication (Appendix 25). Data for the sample report were analyzed by the IRE Office, and results were presented to MSMS program administrators for their evaluation. The completed MSMS report was also shared with the Program Review/Assessment Committee for discussion and feedback.

Satisfied with the outcome of the MSMS report, the Director of IRE and the Assessment Analyst met with all WesternU programs over the course of two months in early 2012 to introduce the assessment process and template (using the MSMS results as an example). These discussions were held with curriculum or assessment committees (depending on program structure) to ensure that they understood the process and expectations, provide clarification of any aspects of the assessment template that were unclear, and garner more feedback on ways it could be improved.

At the conclusion of this round of meetings, a few modifications were made to the template. The Program Review/Assessment Committee reviewed and approved the amended version of the assessment template in March 2012 (Appendix 26). The first annual assessment reporting process examining Interpersonal Communication and Evidence-Based Practice began shortly after and culminated in November 2012.

**Overview of WesternU Assessment Process**

Each year in March, the Director of IRE and the Senior Assessment Analyst meet with program representatives to discuss that year’s assessment templates and answer any questions they may have. Program representatives may come from curriculum committees, assessment committees, or some other ad hoc group chosen to lead the process. Two templates are discussed
with each program, one for each institutional learning outcome to be assessed. From that point, programs have approximately four months to complete assessment reports.

Reports are submitted to the Director of IRE in July, who then distributes them among members of the Assessment/Program Review Committee for their review. Two committee members review each report, making sure that no one evaluates a report from his or her own program. To help guide feedback, committee members utilize a feedback form (Appendix 27) and an assessment evaluation rubric that describes expectations for each section of the assessment report (Appendix 28).

The rubric contains nine rows (Assessable Learning Outcomes, Evidence, Assessment Participation, Assessment Goals, Methods for Data Collection, Results, Discussion, Implications, and Organization) that roughly parallel the assessment template. Scoring for each section is on a four-point scale (1 = Initial, 2 = Emerging, 3 = Developed, 4 = Highly Developed). In addition to further outlining expectations, the rubric allows for some form of comparison, where each WesternU program can benchmark its performance against other WesternU programs.

Once the feedback process is completed, the IRE Office Senior Assessment Analyst reviews each feedback form and assembles individual feedback reports for all programs. As a supplement, the Senior Assessment Analyst also creates a meta-report, which is shared with executives such as the Provost and the college Deans.

An overview of the assessment reporting process (Table 4) and a description of WesternU’s assessment template (Table 5), along with how they align with CFRs from the WASC accreditation handbook, can be found below.

Table 4: WesternU Institutional Assessment Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning and Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Report Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Internal Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Program Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Annual Follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Report Sections</td>
<td>Elements within Assessment Sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Program Learning Outcomes Assessing ILO</td>
<td>All program learning outcomes assessing the targeted institutional learning outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Assessment Evidence</td>
<td>Only the program learning outcomes that were assessed for the report, both direct and indirect forms of evidence used to assess the program learning outcomes, and the courses and time period these assessments occur within the programs’ curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Assessment Participants</td>
<td>The titles and roles of each of the program’s participants in the assessment process for the report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Assessment Goals</td>
<td>For every direct and indirect assessment, the purpose of the assignment, the definition of student success, specific benchmarks for individual students, specific goals if the collected data is disaggregated by demographic variables, any additional goals seen fit for assessment of the learning outcomes, and the scoring method of the assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Assessment Methods</td>
<td>A narrative describing the data collection method, scoring tool, and analytical plan for each assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Assessment Results</td>
<td>Sample size, all applicable descriptive statistics, tables, charts, and other inferential statistics for all direct and indirect assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Assessment Discussion</td>
<td>Restates the major findings of the assessment, explains the meaning of the findings, discusses whether or not the program goals were met and why, limitations to the assessment, and any alternative explanations to the findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Implications of Assessment</td>
<td>States if the results have been discussed or circulated, with whom the results were discussed, how the results might be used, and if the results have led to internal discussion or any other follow-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year 1: Assessment of Interpersonal Communication and Evidence-Based Practice

Although only one year in, WesternU’s first complete assessment reporting process has provided us with a number of important insights. For instance, using scores from WesternU’s assessment report rubric, we generated data to evaluate overall performance for the assessment of Interpersonal Communication and Evidence-Based Practice (see Figures 2 and 3).

Overall, results between the two outcome domains were similar. For instance, the strongest area in both Interpersonal Communication (mean = 2.5) and Evidence-Based Practice (mean = 2.9) reports was on Organization. These figures indicate that, on average, the organization of reports was Developed (in the case of Evidence-Based Practice) or near developed (for Interpersonal Communication). Other aspects of assessment reports that were above average (as indicated by the red line in each chart) were Assessable Learning Outcomes and Assessment Participation. These findings suggest that the assessment process within each program was sufficiently organized and the program learning outcomes align well with the institutional learning outcomes.

On the other hand, results also show areas that were somewhat weak on average for WesternU assessment reports. For example, on both outcomes, Assessment Goals and Methods for Data Collection were well below average. This result alludes to a few different shortcomings. To receive a score of 4 (Well Developed) in this area, programs should demonstrate a systematic data collection process. Assessment Goals were relatively weak on average. That is, many programs did not clearly articulate the purpose or expectation for their assessments. Assessment Goals should not be based on grades, and criteria for assessing data should be valid and reliable.

Findings also show that Implication sections on both Interpersonal Communication (mean = 2.0) and Evidence-Based Practice (mean = 1.8) were weak. Either the recommendations or plan of action was minimal or missing entirely, or it was unclear how results of the assessment would be used.

Figure 2. Western University Interpersonal Communication Skills Assessment Rubric Scores
Discussion

Generally speaking, we believe the first annual assessment reporting cycle was a relative success. The process revealed areas of strengths (e.g., Assessment Participation) that can lead to a number of positive outcomes. For instance, strong participation can drive improvement in all other aspects of assessment. Participation is also the key to establishing a culture where assessment is embedded in, rather than a separate part of, the program.

Finding weaknesses in the assessment process was also extremely important. Many programs stated assessment goals that were defined by passing scores on an assignment or in a course. Procedures for capturing the kind of assessment data to tease out specific outcomes of interest were not always present. We now know that methodology to capture data beyond grades is not well established. We also know that deficiencies in the availability of assessment data strongly impacted assessment results and implications of findings in reports.

Overall, it was clear that the philosophy of embedding signature assignments, capturing assessment data on broad outcomes such as Interpersonal Communication, presented a significant challenge. In some cases, data for the assessments that already take place, and could provide valuable information, were not available.

After some discussion, the Assessment/Program Review Committee made the decision to redo next year’s assessment reports on the same two institutional learning outcomes; Interpersonal Communication and Evidence-Based Practice. Given 2012 as a pilot of sorts, programs have identified their weak points on these two outcomes and are preparing to address them in next year’s report. In addition, we have provided the schedule for the coming years, so that preparation on those outcomes may begin as well.
Table 6. WesternU Assessment Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Interpersonal Communication</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evidence-Based Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Critical Thinking</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Clinical Competence</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ethical and Moral Decision Making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Life-Long Learning</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Humanism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Steps

To aid in the pursuit of reliable and valid assessment data with meaningful results, WesternU is currently developing a plan to improve assessment contributions. Faculty workshops, although in the infancy stages of development, are being created in conjunction with the Center for Academic and Professional Enhancement to help support faculty with data collection methodologies, assessment rubric development, data analysis, and curricular mapping strategies. To further improve WASC assessment knowledge and information, IRE will begin to recruit personnel from WesternU programs who are interested in participating in upcoming WASC workshops. Furthermore, IRE will apply to WASC ALA to send the Senior Assessment Analyst to the training starting in 2013. As a final step toward improving WesternU assessment strategies, the Assessment and Program Review Committee is currently modifying the assessment report template, taking into consideration suggestions for improvement from all program faculty.

Discussion: Culture of Evidence

Overall, WesternU has a number of processes in place to help promote and sustain a culture of evidence. For example, WesternU’s Outcomes site, BOT reporting process, and annual student surveys provide campus constituents with readily accessible data to help gauge their effectiveness. In each case, data are disaggregated by student type to allow for deeper insight. In addition, the narrative process (for BOT reports) and the meeting process (for annual student survey) help program administrators digest the information they receive.

WesternU structures are also better suited to meet reporting demands. IRE reorganized itself to improve its functional capacity. The Data Standards Team will provide a means to centralize reporting processes and help implement reporting structures in order to make data more accessible to larger groups of people.

Program review and institutional assessment also have improved a great deal in recent years. At the time of WesternU’s site visit, institutional program review and assessment processes were virtually nonexistent. Since that time, the assembling of the Program Review/Assessment Committee and the development of guidelines for Program Review and
Assessment have provided the WesternU community with clear expectations for measuring student learning.

In each case, we have attempted to create processes that are rigorous, useful, and sustainable. For instance, the assessment process encourages programs to embed assessment within the curriculum. By using work that is already being done to inform assessment, the process takes advantage of students’ motivation to do well. Assessments also tend to be more rigorous and more authentic. We can also be fairly certain that embedded assessment evaluates what was actually taught in a class. This approach reduces load on faculty and students, as no additional time is required to create or complete assessment.

We have taken a similar approach with our program review process. Rather than dismiss the work done for professional accreditation, we aim to incorporate this work as appropriate. Programs are not required to undergo two full reviews, but rather can integrate the two. Moreover, WesternU programs do not have to be sold on a completely new and separate system. They already buy in to the professional accreditation, thus program review is seen as a supplement to what they are doing.

We have also taken some major steps toward building a culture that is committed to using data to drive decision making. In addition to having widespread representation on the Program Review/Assessment Committee, the WesternU community is participating heavily in both the assessment and program review processes. For instance, program review readers’ panels may consist exclusively of WesternU employees. The IRE office meets regularly with program faculty and administration to discuss expectations for both assessment and program review.
Institutional Growth

Overview

In recent years, WesternU has experienced tremendous growth. Since 2003, the University has added five colleges, with a total of seven new programs. The student body and employee counts have more than doubled during this time. In addition to these developments, WesternU has recently expanded its mission to include an emphasis on scholarly research.

This rate of growth drew a fair amount of attention during WesternU’s most recent reaffirmation cycle, with both the WASC CPR and EER visiting teams expressing concern. As indicated in the 2009 WASC EER Site Visit Report, the visiting team left with the impression that WesternU was “consumed with continued growth and new program development,” and openly wondered whether this would lead to significant strain to academic and nonacademic support units. Moreover, the EER visiting team pondered whether there is sufficient energy at WesternU for raising the bar of excellence in the future.

In WesternU’s response (dated January 2010) to the WASC Visiting Team Report, President Pumerantz acknowledged that staff numbers may have been limited as the institution prepared to open four new colleges. WesternU has made no secret of its goal to become a comprehensive health science institution. The 2005 Ten-Year Strategic Plan, which coincided with the start of the WASC reaffirmation cycle, outlined plans to offer doctoral programs in all major health professions, develop research-based master’s programs, expand research capacity in general, and develop an Interprofessional program. Nevertheless, the President indicated a commitment to address any infrastructure issues within WesternU’s budget process as the University moves forward.

As it is, WesternU has several systems in place that are designed to assist planning at both the unit and institutional level. Processes such as BOT reports, program preview, professional accreditation, student and employee surveys, and assessment foster a culture of evidence at the unit level. Academic and nonacademic units are obligated to make data-driven analyses of their units on a regular basis, while intermittent activities, such as WesternU’s ongoing strategic planning initiative, allow for institution-level reflection.

Specific concerns, such as WesternU’s capacity to conduct scholarly research, are being addressed as well. In 2010, a Research Infrastructure Task Force was formed to look at streamlining business processes to support research activities. Most recently, the task force submitted a list of recommendations to the Provost for review.

Budgeting Process

At the center of WesternU’s planning activities is the budgeting process, which supports institutional goals by integrating demands from colleges and departments (CFR 3.5, 4.2). The allocation of resources consists of two major phases, beginning with Phase I in the fall of each year and culminating with Phase II in the spring, when the the new, approved budget is allocated for the next fiscal year.

During Phase I, WesternU units submit petitions for critical needs, which may include requests for new or modified positions, or augmentation of operating or capital funds. Each unit then meets with WesternU’s Budget Committee to elaborate on the unit’s request. Presentations to the Budget Committee include support for the request, and may incorporate data from sources
such as BOT reports, professional accreditation, or program review documents. At the conclusion of all meetings, the Budget Committee provides the Business, Finance and Investment Committee (a subcommittee of the BOT) with a summary of the proposed University budget. The BOT meets in March to discuss recommendations from the Business, Finance and Investment Committee, and publishes the final approved budget shortly thereafter.

During Phase II, WesternU units begin the process of allocating critical needs funds. Given that, generally, not all requests are met, unit heads have the discretion to allocate funds as they deem appropriate. Allocation requests are reviewed by the Budget Office to ensure that they follow protocol before being approved by the Provost and CFO.

WesternU Data

Data from the WesternU BOT reports indicate that support numbers have generally kept pace with the institutional growth (CFR 3.1). For instance, inspection of data from the 2012 WesternU November BOT report indicates that our student-faculty ratio (CFR 3.2) is lower today than it was five years ago (Figure 4). Examination of faculty-to-academic support ratio (Figure 5) reveals a similar story. Overall, the academic support staff is growing at a slightly faster rate than faculty.

Figure 4. Student-to-Faculty Ratio Over Past Five Years
Equally as important, institutional support units are also keeping pace. For instance, the ratio of students to IT staff has not changed much in the past five years (see Figure 6), while the ratio of employees to IT staff has gone up only slightly (see Figure 7). Comparable metrics that examine University Student Affairs (Appendix 29), Facilities (Appendix 30), and the Library (Appendix 31) paint a similar picture.
In an effort to verify whether BOT reports are being used effectively, the WASC Steering Panel conducted a brief survey of report contributors in July 2012. The BOT Report Survey (Appendix 32) asked respondents to indicate whether reports are distributed within their program/unit and to provide examples of their usage. Furthermore, a series of structured items addressed whether data provided on BOT reports is useful for assessing performance, unit health, budget planning, and strengths and weaknesses.

Overall, 75 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that BOT reports are widely shared with unit members. Specific examples of how reports are being used include general discussion, accreditation (professional), planning, benchmarking, and internal evaluation.

Perhaps not surprisingly, results also revealed that the Capacity and Growth (December/November) BOT report is particularly useful for evaluating organizational infrastructure. For instance, 90.9 percent of respondents indicated that the Capacity and Growth BOT report is at least somewhat useful for budget planning. Overall, 80 percent of respondents indicated that the report is useful to them for assessing unit staffing, with 50 percent indicating very useful. Finally, 81.8 percent indicated that the Capacity and Growth report is at least somewhat useful for establishing priorities (36.4 percent indicated very useful).
Table 7. Please indicate how useful to you the December BOT REPORT - CAPACITY and GROWTH is in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Not At All Useful</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget planning</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process improvement</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing priorities</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional accreditation (if applicable)</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping unit goals</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing unit strengths</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing unit weaknesses</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing opportunities for our unit</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing threats to unit</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing unit staffing</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing overall unit health</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparable survey of WesternU’s Board of Trustees echoed results of those given by units/programs (Appendix 33). As Table 8 indicates, 100 percent of respondents indicated at least somewhat useful on all seven items. Closer inspection reveals that BOT reports are particularly useful for Assessing WesternU Unit Strengths and Weaknesses (87.5 percent Very Useful), Assessing WesternU Unit Goals (87.5 percent), and Assessing Overall WesternU Health (75.0 percent). Results for the three other BOT reporting templates are similar. Overall, BOT reports provide units with important data, which is then used to guide planning.
Table 8. Please indicate how useful to you BOT reports are in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Not At All Useful</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessing WesternU unit strengths</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing WesternU unit weaknesses</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing opportunities for WesternU units</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing threats to WesternU units</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing WesternU unit staffing</td>
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Research Infrastructure

One of the recurring themes of the most recent reaffirmation cycle was the then recent shift of WesternU’s mission to incorporate an emphasis on biomedical research. In the EER Visiting Team Report, the team recognized that WesternU had successfully advanced this agenda, as shown by an increase in funded research. Yet, the team also cited evidence that systems to carry this agenda further were inadequate. Moreover, internal analysis of the issue suggested that research activities were being stalled by human resources, purchasing, grants administration, and business processes that were ill prepared to support an enhanced research agenda.

To evaluate capacity for conducting biomedical research, WesternU’s Provost formed the Infrastructure Task Force in 2010. The primary goals of this team were to evaluate and assist with WesternU’s transformation from an institution whose business was teaching to one that also can support a developing research-oriented culture. During Phase I, the taskforce assessed the needs of researchers and attempted to quantify existing deficits. The general conclusion drawn during Phase I was that WesternU’s infrastructure was in need of significant improvement in order to achieve the “climate necessary for the scale of biomedical research necessary to fulfill its institutional mission.” The task force culminated its work with the Report of the Research Infrastructure Taskforce (dated July 2011), which outlined 27 separate recommendations to improve WesternU’s research capacity.

The first recommendation resulting from Phase I was the formation of an oversight committee to help coordinate, implement, and evaluate the recommendations outlined in the report. This led to the initiation of Phase II, which began with the creation of a second taskforce in fall 2011. In addition to serving as a temporary response to the first recommendation of Phase I, this team negotiated changes in policies and procedures related to researcher credit card policies, research hiring expediting, and interdepartmental Banner-based purchasing and receiving processes. In response to the recommendations from Phase I, the Phase II taskforce made two additional recommendations:
1. The creation of a standing committee (reporting to the Vice President for Research) that is empowered to review infrastructure concerns related to the research arena.

2. The creation of a standing committee (reporting to the Vice President for Research) to continue evaluation and implementation of the research infrastructure efforts.

These recommendations were submitted to Provost Gary Gugelchuk in September 2012, along with the formal report of the Phase II Research Infrastructure Taskforce (Appendix 34).

The report was reviewed by the Provost in October 2012, and a decision to approve a Phase III implementation plan was made. Recommendation #1 (from Phase II) was authorized as written. For recommendation #2, a decision was made to assemble an ad hoc (rather than a standing) committee. As of December 2012, the initiation of Phase III is on hold, as issues with the way the University implements its budget system in Banner are inhibiting progress. A Banner consultant has been contracted to look into these issues so that WesternU can achieve greater efficiencies in its processes and continue with the research infrastructure implementation plan.

Strategic Planning Initiative

In late 2011, WesternU embarked on an institutional strategic planning initiative (CFR 4.1). This endeavor is seen as an opportunity for the institution to reflect on its mission, values, and short- and long-range goals, and ultimately will enable WesternU to better serve its membership and constituencies. The initiative not only addresses WesternU’s identity, but it also emphasizes ways in which WesternU’s internal fitness may be strengthened so that the University can continue its ascent toward becoming a leader in education, research, and health care.

The process began with the formation of the Strategic Planning Taskforce, chaired by Vice Provost Sheree Aston. Working groups were organized to oversee 1) the Internal and External Environmental Scan, 2) the development of Strategic Goals, 3) Implementation Tactics, 4) Budget, 5) Communication and Marketing, 6) and Monitoring and Evaluation Systems.

As part of the internal scan, a survey of the WesternU community was conducted to generate ideas and suggestions for areas that needed to be addressed in the Strategic Plan. The survey generated 373 responses, a majority of which came from WesternU faculty and staff, followed by WesternU students. Responses to the survey were organized into five themes (Appendix 35): Academic Direction and Programs, Patient Care, Research and Scholarship, Internal/Infrastructure, and Other.

In addition, a retreat involving 50 WesternU administrators, faculty, staff, and Trustees was held in February 2012 to deliberate on major goals for the process. The retreat focused on WesternU’s mission and values, as well as the importance of collaboration, how to focus better on outcomes, how WesternU can “break the silos” around operating units, and how to improve the University’s “internal fitness.”

Initial goals and objectives for the Strategic Plan were developed and refined over the next several months, with much input from both college and university branches of the institution. A draft of WesternU’s Strategic Plan, containing seven broad domains (termed goals), was reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees in December 2012 (Appendix 36). Goals outlined in this report address the areas of Education, Health Care,
Research, Interprofessional Education, Financial, Internal Fitness, and Community Engagement. Dispersed throughout these seven goals are a total of 31 objectives.

Following development of the Strategic Plan draft, the WesternU community was invited to submit proposals aimed at addressing one or more of the outlined strategic goals and objectives. Proposals were evaluated for funding by the Academic Affairs team (including the Provost) and the President. The target is to fund selected proposals beginning in the 2013 fiscal year.

Discussion

Data from BOT reports suggest that support unit and faculty numbers are improving over already strong numbers. WesternU’s student-to-faculty ratio has actually gone down over the past few years. Ratio for major support units, such as the Library, IT, and Student Affairs have kept pace with the growth of the University. Finally, the BOT reporting process itself, combined with WesternU’s budget process, provide opportunities to align needs with planning.

In addition, WesternU has created ad hoc committees to evaluate specific important issues such as research. The Research Infrastructure Taskforce conducted an in-depth analysis of WesternU’s existing deficits related to carrying out research. Its findings uncovered (and, in some cases, addressed) some real issues with WesternU policies and procedures related to the institution’s research capacity. While not complete, the work of the Research Infrastructure Taskforce has provided WesternU leadership with tangible suggestions for increasing the University’s research capabilities.

Finally, close inspection of the goals and objectives produced by the strategic planning initiative reveal several that directly address concerns expressed in the WASC reaffirmation letter. Chief among them is the Internal Fitness goal, which outlines objectives that stress the importance of operations units, financial resources, and infrastructure. Objectives also target the importance of processes like human resource development and enhancement of the expression of WesternU’s identity (inwardly and outwardly).

On the whole, we expect WesternU’s strategic planning activities to assist with planning on all levels. This process drives unit alignment and helps us set institutional priorities. It provides an opportunity to evaluate university systems and processes. It reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement. Moreover, our strategic planning process brings together the various WesternU divisions to work on common goals.
Faculty Participation in Governance

History

Faculty governance has been a topic of concern at WesternU dating back to the 2001 WASC reaffirmation letter (Appendix 37), where the WASC Commission commented on the need to “create a culture of inclusiveness and effective governance structures and processes.” To examine this concern, a team of WesternU faculty and staff was assembled in 2006, as part of WesternU’s WASC CPR review, to look into the issue. Over a period of two years, the Organizational Roles Panel researched existing literature, conducted an internal analysis of WesternU’s existing governance model, and consolidated the information to generate recommendations on best practices (Appendix 38).

The report of the Organizational Roles panel helped spur a couple of immediate modifications to WesternU’s governance structure. For instance, the Academic Senate revised its handbook to include oversight of academic policy at the institutional level. To further clarify it responsibility over academic issues, the name of WesternU’s faculty governance body was changed to the Academic Senate (CFR 3.11). To help support faculty’s revised role, WesternU added staffing to the Office of the Provost.

By 2010, the WASC Commission noted that “communication across University constituencies has improved.” However, the Commission continued to raise concerns regarding the maturity level of the governance program, citing the lack of “regular dialog between senior faculty leadership and administration” and the absence of any advancement in “implementing proposed changes for a new system of faculty governance.” The Commission urged WesternU to take action on a “governance model that ensures an appropriate role at the institutional level.”

In response, the Chair of the Academic Senate proposed the major goal to create a working model of faculty governance for WesternU based on WASC recommendations, best practices, and an internal scan. Results from faculty surveys conducted in 2009 and 2010, the work done by the Organizational Roles panel, and a secondary review of existing literature clearly showed that the ideal governance system would give more authority to the faculty within the academic domain, include a system to review potential administrative decisions, and allow input from the collective faculty voice. In accordance with recommendations from the American Federation of Teachers on Faculty Governance in Higher Education, the Academic Senate generated the following three objectives:

- Assure faculty governance is democratic and inclusive.
- Improve the efficiency of the Academic Senate.
- Improve trust and communication with the administration and Board of Trustees.

Update on Faculty Governance

With objectives more clearly outlined, the Academic Senate’s role within WesternU’s organizational structure is steadily maturing. The Academic Senate continues to meet monthly, and the meetings are more closely aligned with Faculty Handbook guidelines. Subcommittees are more active than before, allowing for more in-depth evaluation of time-consuming issues. Communication with the administration is more consistent. The Academic Senate Chair meets
with the Provost quarterly to report on the progress of outstanding issues and to discuss ideas for future directions.

The Senate has also implemented a number of changes intended to increase faculty participation. For instance, a Blackboard site was established to post and share pertinent information with the faculty body. To increase participation on committee elections, the Senate introduced an electronic voting system and made an allowance for Senate members to collect votes from their colleagues. To help ensure that a faculty governance model was democratic and inclusive, committee membership on the Senate and participation in faculty assemblies are open to faculty who are greater than 50 percent time, regardless of rank.

There have been other process improvements as well. For example, to improve the transition between Academic Senate chairs, past and present chairs meet on a regular basis to ensure continuity of work and to share ideas. The Senate also voted to include an alternate from each college to improve meeting attendance and representation from each college. The Chair and the Vice-Chair meet on a monthly basis outside of the general meeting to strategize and plan agendas. Finally, Academic Senate meeting times were increased from 60 to 90 minutes per month.

Communication between the Senate and non-faculty constituents has also improved. The current Chair of the Academic Senate attends Board of Trustees meetings regularly to provide updates and a faculty voice during meetings. The Board of Trustees receives a quarterly report of the Academic Senate’s programs. The Academic Senate Chair was also invited to participate in the University Strategic Planning Committee.

Finally, the Academic Senate has received more resources to help it conduct its work. For instance, an administrative associate was hired in the Office of the Provost, with some responsibilities to the Academic Senate. The administrative associate helps coordinate meetings, takes notes, and generates meeting minutes for the Senate. The University provided a budget for the Senate for professional development (e.g., seminars, training, workshops). According to the Chair, the Senate expects to send two to three faculty members to the Association of American Colleges and Universities Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in 2013.

Due in large part to these improvements, the Academic Senate continues to exercise more and more influence on substantive issues within WesternU. For instance, the Academic Senate lobbied to have a Biosafety Compliance Officer position approved; this person will greatly enhance the ability of the faculty to perform research. The Senate also had an administrative position approved to aid with organization. Two people have been hired and have started in these positions during the 2012-2013 academic year.

A subcommittee reporting to the Academic Senate was assembled in 2010 to work on an institutional policy on the assignment of credit hours at WesternU (CFR 3.11). The committee finalized a draft of the policy in September 2012 and is preparing to submit it to the faculty for approval.

The Academic Senate also completed a report on University patent policy, which was submitted to the Vice President for Research and Biotechnology for review. The patent policy, which is currently being reviewed, will be submitted to University administration for final approval. Similar Academic Senate committees are working on policy related to Promotion and Tenure, Intellectual Property, and Sabbatical Leave.

Efforts to improve communication with the Board of Trustees were also initiated. The Chair met with representatives of the Board of Trustees who have experience in faculty governance early in 2012. Reports to the Board of Trustees focused on goals, strategic planning,
identification of anticipated needs, and progress since previous meetings. This approach was generally applauded by the Board of Trustees. Individual feedback to the Chair of the Academic Senate was overwhelmingly positive, with support from several Board of Trustee members for addressing identified needs (i.e. support staff for the Chair).

The Senate continues to look inward as well. Standing committees listed in the Faculty Handbook are currently being evaluated by the Senate to determine their effectiveness. Committees that have been unproductive are being scrutinized to determine whether they should be disbanded or whether their charge should be altered so that they can serve the faculty better. Furthermore, a proposal to include the Program Review/Assessment Committee in the Faculty Handbook is under consideration.

The line of communication from the administration to the Senate has improved as well. An administrative proposal regarding new student housing was presented to the Senate, with a request by the administration for feedback. Several University administrators have asked the Senate to invite them to meetings to address issues. For instance, Elizabeth Rega (Assistant Vice Provost) and Sheree Aston (Vice Provost) met with the Senate to discuss the inclusion of IPE participation in Promotion and Tenure policy. As referenced earlier, Steven Henriksen (VP Research and Biotechnology) approached the Senate to discuss patent policy and copyright issues.

**Evaluation of Changes**

To evaluate whether recent changes to the Academic Senate have been effective, the Senate, with the support of IRE, has continued to collect feedback on its progress. For instance, in 2012, a brief survey of WesternU’s faculty senators was conducted to evaluate improvements in governance and to solicit ideas for further improvement (Appendix 39). Overall, the findings were very encouraging. For example, when asked to specify how they feel faculty governance has improved, comments generally align with the specific changes mentioned earlier. Sample comments include:

- **Growing Administrative Support**
  - The University’s administration is determined to empower faculty and involve them in the decision-making process.
  - The University consults and seeks the opinion of the Senate on important issues.
  - The University is providing staff support to the Senate, which will enhance its effectiveness.
  - Improved communication with the Provost’s Office and University administration.
  - Unilateral decisions by the Provost’s Office that changed the University Faculty Handbook without input of the faculty have stopped.
  - The Faculty [sic] Senate had several issues moved forward including the hiring of a Biosafety Compliance Officer and an administrative assistant for the Chair of the Faculty [sic] Senate.

- **Process Improvements**
  - Senate meets regularly.
Senate is dedicated to making a positive difference at the University.

In 2012, college Deans were surveyed on their perception of changes to faculty governance in the past two to three years. Overall, four (of seven) deans indicated improvements in that time. One of the Deans noted that a mentor system was established to build relationships and teamwork. These mentorship programs will encourage new faculty to be involved in faculty governance. WesternU’s newest colleges (Colleges of Optometry, Dentistry, and Podiatry) made significant changes by having elected committee members instead of appointed committees. Deans noted that faculty handbooks were established in the new colleges, and the new colleges actively engaged existing faculty in the hiring of additional faculty, as well as in making changes to the curriculum.

A 2012 survey of WesternU faculty (Appendix 40), which was a follow-up to a similar survey conducted in 2009 (Appendix 41), also reveals an improved view of governance by the faculty at-large. According to the 2012 survey, 98.8 percent of faculty indicated that participation in shared governance is a worthwhile faculty responsibility, up slightly from 96.8 percent in 2009. In 2012, 84.3 percent of faculty respondents indicated that they are willing and able to dedicate a larger role in university governance, compared to only 64.9 percent in 2009.

Respondents on the 2012 Faculty Governance survey were also asked to respond to a series of governance-related items in two ways: their perception of the current governance structure and their ideal governance structure. The response scale ranged from none (indicating no faculty participation) to determination (indicating that the faculty has final authority). Mean responses to these items are shown in Figure 8.

Overall, there was close alignment between the faculty’s perception of decisions about content of the curriculum (mean difference of .3) within the current structure and their ideal. This indicates that faculty members’ perception of WesternU’s current structure is very similar to their ideal. Other areas with strong alignment include selection of members for institution-wide committees, setting degree requirements, and appointment of full-time faculty.
On the other hand, results from Figure 8 also show several areas where perception of the current structure does not match the ideal. For instance, the largest gap was for input to construction programs for buildings and other facilities (mean difference = 1.2). Other areas where faculty would like more input than they have include setting average teaching loads, appointing faculty chairs, and setting faculty salary scales.

Senators also provided a number of suggestions for improving faculty input. These include:

- **College support for participation in faculty governance at institutional level.**
- **More Faculty [sic] Senate input.**
- **Work on getting more input from faculty at-large.**
- **Committees need budgets to function.**
- **There are still decisions that are handled exclusively by administration (e.g., Lebanon Campus, New Student Housing).**
- **Faculty [sic] Senate needs to work on communication with administration and faculty at-large.**
Recommendations

All in all, the Academic Senate is making steady progress toward carving out a meaningful role within WesternU’s organizational structure. Communication between the Senate and the University administration is stronger than ever. The Senate is gaining the confidence and support of both the faculty and administration. Nevertheless, there remain areas for improvement. Needs include:

- **Enhance faculty development related to governance**: We recognize that the Academic Senate has acquired resources for professional development; however, the Senate should also consider seeking out training opportunities for the faculty at-large. One idea is to partner with WesternU’s Center for Academic and Professional Enhancement to offer leadership or governance workshops to all faculty and administrators. Perhaps governance training could be embedded in the orientation of new faculty. Moreover, similar training might also be offered for new administrators (including Deans), so that they can familiarize themselves with not only their role, but also that of faculty.

- **Accelerate the review of Academic Senate committees**: The Academic Senate must move more quickly to evaluate existing faculty committees to ensure that the appropriate structure is in place for them to govern effectively. According to results of the 2012 Faculty Governance survey, the largest gap between the perception of current governance and the ideal governance is related to the construction of buildings. Review of the Faculty Handbook reveals that this is the role of the Facilities Planning and Safety Committee. This work has been under consideration for more than two years, yet there has not been movement.

- **Improve processes for involving faculty at-large**: Inquiries revealed that the processes for involving faculty can be improved. Decisions have at times been slowed by insufficient voting numbers. For instance, a vote to increase the Senate Chair’s term to two years from the current one-year term did not obtain a quorum. If this problem persists, the Senate might consider modifying its guidelines to allow alternate methods for getting motions passed.

- **Put processes in place to involve Lebanon Campus**: As the new campus of COMP in Oregon does not have a faculty representative in the Academic Senate, a mechanism should be created to allow a member of the Lebanon campus faculty to participate.

- **Committee Charge Chart**: An organizational chart should be developed that shows the interface of the Academic Senate with the Provost’s Office and the interface of various university-wide committees with the University administration.
Conclusion

Western University of Health Sciences continues to evolve. Looking back, the concerns raised by the WASC Commission were not unrelated issues. They raised questions about missing or underdeveloped university processes, such as program review, assessment, and faculty governance. Now 35 years removed from its humble beginnings, the University is beginning to move beyond professional roles and licensure examinations toward a more unified identity.

During the past two years, WesternU has achieved several significant accomplishments to help bring together its collection of colleges. Building on the work conducted during the WASC reaffirmation phase, the Program Review/Assessment Committee has developed an assessment process to evaluate the University’s eight institutional outcomes. Program review, which had just begun when the EER visit took place, continues to be developed. Together, program review and assessment not only help monitor program quality, but they ensure that programs reflect WesternU standards. They bring together faculty, staff, and administrators to discuss substantive University issues.

Supporting these processes are much stronger central structures, led in part by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The Office itself is more prepared to meet reporting demands, which include both institutional and assessment data. The Data Standards Team, which will help maintain the integrity and accessibility of institutional data, will fill an important role. Finally, faculty governance has also improved. Overall, trust between the administration and the Academic Senate has grown tremendously.

Nonetheless, we understand that more progress is needed on a number of fronts. The Academic Senate must continue to develop expertise among its ranks. The restructuring of faculty committees is overdue and should be addressed as soon as possible. Program review and assessment must be continually evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. Furthermore, more co-curricular programs must be added to the schedule.

Overall, most of the structures to address weaknesses with institutional processes are in place and making progress. Thanks, in large part, to work conducted throughout the entire WASC reaffirmation process, ideas have been developed into tangible products. Equally important are the ramifications the WASC process has had on the people of WesternU. We recognize that there will likely be difficult challenges along the way. Yet, we feel very prepared to cope with these challenges as we strive to find our way.