

FIVE-YEAR INTERIM REPORT

Submitted to The Commission of



Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

Fall 2012

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General Information

Cover Sheet

Please complete the following information:

1. Name of Institution: Point Loma Nazarene University
2. Physical address of main campus: 3900 Lomaland Drive, San Diego, CA 92106
3. Date of submission of this report: October 26, 2012
4. Person submitting the report: President Brower

I. List of Topics or Concerns Addressed in Report

The interim report is submitted in response to the February 28, 2008, Commission Action Letter of the Western Association of Schools & Colleges.

Summary of Commission Topics or Concerns

As stated in the [Commission letter dated February 28, 2008](#), from Dr. Ralph Wolff, President and Executive Director, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, “the Commission acted to: request that an interim report be submitted electronically by November 1, 2012. The interim report should provide evidence of clear and appropriate learning outcomes and assessment strategies, including a process for review and renewal of the assessment process itself. The report should provide evidence that the results of assessment are being used in decision making across the campus at program/department and institutional levels.”

The Commission’s letter addresses two specific topics, assessment and new program development/program review. Point Loma Nazarene University is addressing the additional topic of the use of the evidence of student learning in decision making. It is believed that the third topic links assessment and program review and closes the continuous improvement cycle that the University has stressed in its assessment and program review processes. Thus, the interim report is organized around these three topics:

- Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
- New Program Development/ Program Review Process
- Use of the Evidence of Student Learning in Decision Making

II. Institutional Context

When Dr. Phineas F. Bresee responded to the growing need for a Christian college in the Los Angeles area, he believed God used him to answer the heartfelt prayers of a group of six women who called themselves the Bible College Prayer Circle. The group had come together in 1897 and on July 28, 1902, their prayers were answered. Bresee founded and became the first president of Pacific Bible College, which would become Pasadena College, and then later Point Loma Nazarene University. The women had envisioned a Bible college, but Bresee's vision was for a liberal arts university. He believed that spiritual and academic learning went hand-in-hand. He had in mind a substantial university of 3,000 students. Since at the time there were only two institutions in this country with an enrollment of over 3,000 students (the University of Michigan numbered 5,000; Harvard stood at 3,500), this was a big dream indeed.

Pacific Bible College began with 41 students. In 1910 Bresee purchased the Hugus Ranch land in Pasadena and fulfilled his dream of creating not just a Bible college but a university. Nazarene University opened in 1910, and from its beginning included women students.

By 1919 the name of the school had changed again to Pasadena College. Over the years, Pasadena College experienced times of both feast and famine, but it eventually developed into a solid, stable liberal arts institution of about 1,300 students. The college was awarded accreditation from the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools in 1943, and then the Western College Association accredited Pasadena College in 1949.

In 1964 W. Shelburne Brown became the 11th president of Pasadena College. At that time Pasadena College was a vibrant academic community with many faculty and staff members living within

walking distance of the University; however, the 19-acre campus was simply too small to permit further growth and development. In 1973 Dr. Brown was instrumental in moving the college from its location in Pasadena to its 90-acre site overlooking the Pacific Ocean in San Diego. The school became Point Loma College, then Point Loma Nazarene College, and finally Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU). The move to San Diego proved to be a defining event in the future of the institution.

Since coming to San Diego, the university has experienced unprecedented institutional growth and development. In particular, the latter half of the 1990s began the redevelopment of the campus core; virtual completion of the campus master plan; major strides in faculty strength, discourse, and productivity; impressive improvements in student ability; increased selectivity in student admissions; and renewed efforts to maintain a vital relationship with the sponsoring denomination.

Dr. Bob Brower, PLNU's current president, was elected in 1997. In 1998 the college moved to university status, a further indication that many of the founder's hopes and dreams had become, in fact, a reality. In 1999 the University's undergraduate enrollment reached the cap imposed by the city of San Diego for the Point Loma campus. As the result of reaching the cap, almost all graduate programs were moved from the Point Loma Peninsula in 1999. Today the university serves 3,600 undergraduate and graduate students in several locations through 17 academic units with 54 undergraduate programs and nine graduate degree program.

As PLNU moves beyond its 110th year, the University is looking with optimism to the future and asking questions about how to keep our mission vibrant and relevant in a rapidly changing world. The University is focused on strengthening and expanding our distinctive learning community and enhancing our ability to respond positively to the dynamic environment of higher education. Our goal is to prepare effective leaders who impact their world.

The University's most recent accreditation action by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges was the approval of the Master of Arts in Special Education substantive change in fall 2010 and

the Master of Arts in Teaching in the previous fall 2009. The University was approved for reaccreditation by the Commission in February 28, 2008, following the completion of the 2007 **Educational Effectiveness Review**. At this time the University does not have any additional substantive changes pending approval before WASC.

III. Statement on Report Preparation

The interim report preparation began even before the **Commission's letter** was received in February 2008. Having completed the EER, it was clear that the important work begun during WASC Institutional Review Process would continue as PLNU moved to more fully embrace a culture of continuous improvement, one that is informed by the assessment of student learning outcomes. The formal preparation of the interim report began in the summer of 2010 with President Brower's naming of the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council and appointment of Dr. Margaret Bailey as Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and Chair of the Advisory Council. The following is a brief summary of the groups and committees involved in the preparation of the interim report.

- President's Administrative Cabinet and Planning Action Council

The President's Administrative Cabinet is led by President Bob Brower and includes Dr. Kerry Fulcher, the Chief Academic Officer/ Provost; Mr. George Latter, the Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Joe Watkins, the Vice President for External Relations; Dr. Mary Paul, the Vice President for Spiritual Development, and Dr. Caye Smith the Vice President for Student Development. The President's Cabinet has been fully engaged in the report preparation including periodic meetings and updates by the Chair of the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council. Both the Vice Presidents for Spiritual Development and Student Development are actively involved in overseeing the assessment processes in their respective areas and have been working closely with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council.

The Provost is an active participant in several of the committees involved in program review and academic assessment and has been instrumental in leading and redefining the assessment and program review processes into ones of continuous improvement and faculty ownership.

- President's WASC Interim Report Advisory Council

Central to all of the work in preparation of the WASC interim report is the Advisory Council appointed by the President in the summer of 2010. The WASC Interim Report Advisory Council has been chaired by Dr. Margaret Bailey, ALO and Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation and includes Dr. Kerry Fulcher, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Ruth Heinrichs, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness (retired October 2011); Dr. Maria Zack, the Chair of the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences and Special Assistant to the President for Planning; Dr. John Wu, the Chair of the Department of Psychology; Dr. Jeffrey Sullivan, the Chair of Kinesiology; and Dr. Andrea Liston, Associate Dean of the School of Education, Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator. Support staff for the Advisory Council has included Stephanie Lehman, Assessment Coordinator, and Jennifer Fox, Research Specialist of the Office of Institutional Research (left PLNU in February 2012). The Advisory Council has met every other week for over two years and has led the effort to fully shift the culture from one of compliance to continuous improvement. They proposed and designed the assessment wheel, piloted several initiatives such as an improved program review, and provided key academic leadership in assessment (assessment coordinators 2012-13 and assessment assistants and evaluators 2011-12).

- Provost's Council

The Provost's Council members have provided leadership and support in the assessment and program review processes for the academic units. The Provost's Council is continuously engaged in leading and monitoring the academic assessment and program review processes. The Council is led by Dr. Kerry Fulcher, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer and its members include Dr. Mark Pitts, Vice Provost for Academic Administration; Dr. Margaret Bailey, ALO and Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation; Dr. Kathy McConnell, Dean of the College Arts and Sciences and chair of the undergraduate Academic Policies Committee; Dr. Holly Irwin, Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies and chair of the Graduate Studies Committee; Dr. Ivan Filby, Dean of the Fermanian School of Business and Dr. Carol Leighty, Interim Dean of the School of Education.

- Academic Council

The Academic Council is comprised of the Provost's Council (above), the academic unit chairs and deans, the Director of the Ryan Library, the Associate Dean of the School of Education Liberal Studies program, the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Director of the Wesleyan Center. The Academic Council members have provided leadership in their respective academic units in the area of continuous improvement based on student learning outcomes. They have carried most of the responsibility for communicating and meeting the standards and requirements for the revised assessment and program review processes.

- Office of Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation

The Office of the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation was created in the summer of 2011 to bring senior academic leadership to assessment and program

review and oversight of the Offices of Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research. Dr. Margaret Bailey, formerly the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and currently the ALO, was invited to serve in this new position. Dr. Bailey is the Chair of the President's WASC Interim Report Advisory Council, Chair of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and has served on the Program Review Committee and Graduate Studies Committee. She is currently providing leadership to assessment, accreditation, institutional effectiveness, program review, and institutional research.

- Academic Units

The faculty in each of the seventeen academic units fully own and take responsibility for the assessment of the academic programs. Assessment is embedded in the academic culture and their work in supporting student learning outcomes has been exemplary. While different academic units are at different stages in the development of their system for program assessment, all academic units are fully engaged in the process and provide invaluable input to the University community.

- Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The CTL provides support for faculty development in the area of teaching and learning, which includes assessment. The CTL has facilitated faculty workshops as well as individual consultations in the areas of faculty course evaluations, syllabus construction, writing of course learning outcomes and alignment of course outcomes with program and institutional learning outcomes. The CTL has also organized workshops on pedagogical innovation and provided coaching in classroom assessment techniques and strategies. Dr. Jo Clemons is the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

- Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness was formed in 2008 under the leadership of Dr. Ruth Heinrichs, who retired in October 2011. Since her retirement the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has been directed by Dr. Margaret Bailey, ALO and Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation. Dr. Heinrichs was a contributing member of the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council and chaired the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides leadership, training, and support to the curricular and co-curricular assessment processes. The Office hosts workshops and seminars, and sponsors faculty and staff attendance to assessment conferences.

Reviews of the WASC interim report were conducted by the committees and individuals listed below and reviewer recommendations and changes were noted and addressed by the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council. Those who participated in the WASC interim report review included:

- President's Administrative Cabinet
- WASC Advisory Council
- Provost Council
- Academic Council
- Institutional Effectiveness Committee
- Program Review Committee
- Academic Policy Committee (chair and selected members)
- Graduate Studies Committee (chair and selected members)
- Planning Action Council (formerly Strategic Planning Committee)
- Office of Program Development and Accreditation

Recent Institutional History Relevant to the Report:

During the past few years PLNU has experienced several academic leadership and structural transitions resulting in the current academic leadership model that is deeply committed to the ongoing development and renewal of the curricular and co-curricular programs based on the evidence of student learning. Beginning in August 2005 Dr. Keith Bell was appointed the Interim Provost after Dr. Patrick Allen accepted a position at another university. Dr. Bell served as interim Provost until June 2006, at

which time Dr. John Hawthorne began a four-year term as Chief Academic Officer. In January 2010 Dr. Hawthorne resigned and Dr. Kerry Fulcher, who was then serving as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, was invited to lead during the transition as the Interim Provost. In March 2011 Dr. Fulcher was appointed by the President to assume the permanent position of Provost and Chief Academic Officer ([Administration organization chart 2007](#) and [Administration organization chart 2012](#)).

Along with the transition in academic leadership, the academic administrative structure was reorganized. At the time of the 2007 WASC visit the academic administrative structure ([academic leadership organization chart 2007](#)) consisted of:

- Provost and Chief Academic Officer
- Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Vice Provost for International Studies
- Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies and Vice Provost for Educational Effectiveness (with responsibility for assessment)
- Vice Provost for Faculty Development
- Vice Provost for Academic Administration
- Vice Provost for Graduate Studies
- The leaders of all academic departments including the library

The establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the Study Abroad Office and some staffing transitions led to a reevaluation of the academic administration structure. After passing through some intermediate stages, the current academic leadership structure consists of ([academic leadership organization chart 2012](#)):

- Provost and Chief Academic Officer (also currently Chair of the General Education Committee and the Program Review Committee)
- Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (also currently Chair of the Academic Policies Committee)
- Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies (also currently Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee)
- Vice Provost for Academic Administration
- Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation (also currently Chair of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee)
- The leaders of all academic departments including the library

Responsibility for the international studies program now resides in the Study Abroad Office, which reports directly to the Provost. The Center for Teaching and Learning has a full-time director and works with the Faculty Resources Committee. The responsibility for assessment has shifted from the Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies and the Vice Provost for Educational Effectiveness to the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation. Assessment work is supported by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and the Program Review Committee. The one area still in transition is General Education. Currently the Provost holds responsibility for General Education and chairs the General Education Committee. Because most academic departments are engaged in teaching General Education, the Academic Council (a committee of all academic leaders listed above) has devoted some of its regular meeting time to discussing how to create an effective structure for General Education leadership and assessment. It is expected that this will be resolved in the 2012-13 academic year.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness was initially established in 2008 with Dr. Ruth Heinrichs serving as the first Director. The [**Institutional Effectiveness Committee**](#) (which had formerly been the Assessment Committee) formalized an assessment structure and led the university-wide effort that created the Institutional Learning Outcomes and developed Student Learning Outcomes for all programs including General Education ([**Institutional Assessment Plan 2009-2012**](#) and [**Institutional Assessment Plan 2012-2014**](#)). The first Director of Institutional Effectiveness retired in October 2011.

Shortly after the retirement of the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, the Institutional Research Analyst left the University to accept another position with a public agency. The University administration viewed the departure of these two key personnel as an opportunity to restructure and build on best practices for private universities of comparable size. In January 2012, the University hired an institutional effectiveness and institutional research consultant to study the needs and capacity of the University and make recommendations to the President's Administrative Cabinet about best

practices and appropriate staffing of these key administrative offices. The Administration took the immediate step of centralizing the functions of assessment, program review, and institutional research under the Office of Program Development and Accreditation. The Research Analyst function has been filled on an interim basis by a member on the University's Information Technology Services staff. The Institutional Research function of the Institution is currently being co-led by a team of two faculty members with significant IR and data analysis experience. These two faculty members are in the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences (MICS). The University has provided additional release time for these two MICS faculty members to undertake critical institutional research roles during this time of transition. Previous to these structural changes, many of the key institutional effectiveness and research functions were dispersed across the University and lacked consistency in the processing and the selection of data sets. In this interim period the IR process is being redesigned to function as a consistent whole. Redesigned position descriptions for the Director of Intuitional Research and the Research Analyst have been created and the search process for the Director of Institutional Research is well underway.

Program Review oversight has historically been the responsibility of the Provost's Council, with the Dean of Arts and Sciences, who was a member of the Council, providing leadership. The formal PLNU Program Review process was focused only on academic programs. Sometime after the Institutional Effectiveness Committee was formed in 2008, the Committee briefly assumed responsibility for Program Review oversight with the expectation that the formal review would also include the University Centers and the co-curricular programs. However it became clear that it was not practical for the IE Committee to keep responsibility for Program Review. So the responsibility for program review returned to the Provost's Council and that body developed an outline for a new Program Review process that was pilot-tested in 2009-10 academic year. In the fall of 2010 the PLNU faculty determined that a permanent

[Program Review Committee](#) should be formed to complete the revision of the [Program Review](#)

process. The newly formed Program Review Committee was designed to serve both academic units and University Centers and Institutes. The support for co-curricular program review comes through the Office of the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation. For more details see the section on Program Review.

One of the consequences of the multiple changes in academic leadership over the last seven years has been an inconsistent pace in the development and renewal of assessment and program review processes. However, the momentum toward continuous improvement and faculty ownership most dramatically and positively shifted in 2011 with the adoption of the curricular and co-curricular assessment wheels modeled on the [National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment \(NILOA Transparency Framework](#). Each academic and co-curricular unit controls its own wheel and each wheel tells the unique assessment journey of that particular department's programs. As can be seen by reviewing the wheels, this model has provided faculty and staff with the ability to communicate learning outcomes, display data, and make use of data in ways that are congruent with their discipline. In slightly less than a year these assessment wheels have been embraced by the faculty and co-curricular directors and are engaging the leadership in conversations around the campus about improving student learning based on accessible assessment information. The assessment wheels have become rapidly embedded in PLNU's assessment culture and form the evidentiary basis for annual program evaluation and improvement as well as program review. For more details see the section on Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes.

Like most universities, PLNU has experienced many disruptive changes over recent years brought on by the downturn in the economy and changes in higher education. PLNU has emerged much stronger, efficient and healthier. Continuous improvement of the curricular and co-curricular programs based on the evidence of student learning is embedded in the culture of the University. PLNU has arrived at a stable position and has developed a strong foundation for future development and growth.

IV. Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

ISSUE NO 1: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Commission noted in its [letter dated February 28, 2008](#), “The University responded with significant progress in defining meaningful outcomes as a basis for effective assessment practices consistent with its mission.” The challenge given by the Commission was to move the University to the next level in assessment. After review of the Commission findings, the curricular and co-curricular faculty and staff concluded that in order to be sustainable, the assessment process needed clarity of expectations and the process of gathering, analyzing, and reporting data needed to be simplified.

Assessment Action (1) – PLNU Review and Renewal of the Assessment Process

As part of PLNU’s work to prepare for both the [CPR \(2006\)](#) and [EER \(2007\)](#) visits, it became clear that the University would be well served by establishing an Office of Institutional Effectiveness and hiring a full-time director to work with the Assessment Committee and support faculty and the co-curricular staff in their assessment efforts. Until that time the assessment oversight was the responsibility of the Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies and Vice Provost for Educational Effectiveness. As can be seen by the title, this one person had two full-time jobs, which was not sustainable. In addition, it was recognized that there was a need for better alignment between annual assessment work and program review.

With the establishment of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in 2008, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (formerly the Assessment Committee) began the work of creating a more clearly defined assessment framework. Their work over the years included supporting the University in (a) the development of [Institutional Learning Outcomes](#) and [General Education Learning Outcomes](#), (b) an [assessment manual](#), (c) assessment rubrics for [assessment plans](#) and [activities](#), (d) [assessment of the assessment processes](#) within the academic units,

(e) [annual assessment reports](#) and [assessment calendar \(old\)](#), (f) adoption of LiveText as an assessment tool, (g) [inter-rater reliability workshop](#), (h) [PLNU assessment Plan 2009-2012](#), and (i) [assessment glossary](#). In addition, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee hosted several faculty workshops on student learning outcomes and assessment with guest speakers such as Dr. Mary Allen ([spring 2011](#) and [fall 2011](#)). The excellent work by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee went a long way in building assessment capacity and leadership. However, there were lingering questions about faculty ownership and sustainability of processes which were increasingly more complex and which were based on a compliance model, rather than based on continuous improvement.

In fall 2011 the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council, comprised primarily of faculty leadership, proposed shifting the PLNU assessment culture away from a compliance model to a review and renewal process that is based on both the analysis of student learning and the cycle of continuous improvement. The review and renewal process is controlled by faculty within each academic unit and the staff in each co-curricular unit. This new approach made use of the NILOA Transparency Framework ([assessment cycle guidelines](#) and [assessment cycle wheel](#)) and integrated well with a recently redesigned program review process. To accomplish this change, the [assessment calendar \(new\)](#) was adjusted to better align with the Academic Policy Committee and Graduate Studies Committee timeline for submittal of curricular proposals. Even more importantly, the review and renewal model provided more opportunities for faculty reflection on departmental assessment data with more intentionality given to making use of the findings to inform curricular and pedagogical change. (For details on the adoption of the NILOA Transparency Framework, see the upcoming section, Assessment Action (2): Adoption of the Assessment Wheel based on the NILOA Transparency Framework below.)

The review and renewal assessment process was formally launched in January 2012, prior to the start of the spring semester, with a faculty review and renewal workshop entitled, “[Getting it Done!](#)” All of the faculty were invited to attend and work on their assessment plans and activities. The

faculty from the Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences Department were available to assist academic units in identifying ways to convert their qualitative and indirect assessment evidence into meaningful data. In addition, several well-qualified faculty ([assessment evaluators and assistants](#)), some from academic units with professional accreditation, made themselves available to work with faculty who were building rubrics, signature assignments, surveys, etc. Lunch was provided and well over half of the San Diego-based full-time faculty attended. At the end of the semester another review and renewal workshop was held ([June 1, 2012](#)) to assist faculty in evaluating the contents of their assessment wheels.

Over the past year each academic unit has been asked to designate a faculty member to serve as its assessment coordinator to be responsible for maintaining the academic unit's Assessment Wheel, to serve as the point of contact for all issues related to assessment, and to serve as a liaison between the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and the academic unit (assessment coordinators [2011-2012](#) and [2012-2013](#)). The co-curricular programs have for some time had an assessment coordinator to represent their views on the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and these co-curricular assessment coordinators will be assuming responsibility for the maintenance of the co-curricular assessment wheels. These assessment coordinators are also important to the Program Review process because they help facilitate communication between the academic unit and Program Review Committee.

Following the January 2012 Review and Renewal Workshop entitled, "Getting it Done," the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation met individually with each department chair and school dean. In her new oversight responsibilities for Institutional Effectiveness she wanted to engage the academic leadership in an informal assessment of the program review and assessment processes. From these individual meetings many ways were identified to better support the academic units in their assessment work. One outcome of the one-on-one meetings was the development of a comprehensive budget to support assessment and program review activities for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. Previously

the supporting funds for assessment, program review, accreditation, and institutional surveys were dispersed into numerous budgets across campus without a clear indication of the overall level of resources committed to these important activities. Budgets for FY 2012-2013 were centralized into three cost centers: [Accreditation](#), [Institutional Effectiveness](#), [Program Review](#) and [Institutional Research Survey Panel](#). The three budgets are fully transparent and were developed in consultation with the Academic Council and the individuals currently directing Institutional Research.

In addition, the academic chairs and deans suggested that the academic units have more control over the annual review of their assessment plans and activities. In previous years faculty outside the academic unit conducted a “blind” evaluation of the assessment functions within the academic unit. While this approach was appropriate in terms of ensuring accountability, it did not build assessment capacity within the academic unit, did not give faculty enough information to know how to make improvements, and was not useful if the faculty engaged in the assessment of the assessment were not familiar with the academic programs being assessed. It is believed the transparency provided by the Assessment Wheels is a better approach to ensuring accountability and quality processes. Academic units are now asked to assess their own [assessment activities](#) (2011-2012 assessment results: [School of Education summary](#), [Dietetics](#), [Writing](#), [Math](#), [Physics](#), and [Liberal Studies](#)) and plans based on the rubrics created by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. Academic units are also encouraged to invite a faculty member from outside the academic unit to be an additional assessor for objectivity. A [calibration workshop](#) for these rubrics was held in June 2012, and every academic unit was represented.

The University has a number of [Centers](#) that are connected to academic areas of study. Each Center has a designated director and an advisory board made up of faculty, staff, and in some cases students and/or external professionals. Most of these Centers are not part of academic departments and thus have not undergone a regular cycle of assessment and programmatic review. In the 2011-12

academic year a plan was formed to develop the capacity of the Centers for engaging in program review. To that end, each Center was provided brief instructions and required to produce an [annual report](#) and these were submitted to the Provost during the summer 2012 (all Center reports are public on the [University Assessment and Program Review](#) portal page). The Program Review Committee is now studying the annual reports and creating an annual report template. The Center Directors and their boards will be working towards developing specific learning outcomes and measures for those outcomes in the next few years. The goal is to accumulate sufficient learning outcome data so that a regular cycle of Program Review for the Centers can begin in the 2014-15 academic year.

Assessment Action (2) – Adoption of the Assessment Wheel based on the NILOA Transparency Framework

For more than a decade the curricular committees, [Academic Policies Committee \(APC\)](#) and [Graduate Studies Committee \(GSC\)](#), have required evidence of the assessment of student learning outcomes as documentation in support of curricular changes. In addition, the Program Review Committee requires longitudinal evidence of the assessment of student learning outcomes as an integral part of the self-study documentation. While assessing student outcomes is embedded in the academic culture, there was less clear evidence linking specific curricular changes and assessment data to an overall strategic plan for the academic unit. In part this issue was exacerbated by the fact that most of the assessment evidence was password protected or dispersed throughout departmental digital files. The WASC Interim Report Advisory Council considered these issues as well as the need for transparency.

The WASC Interim Report Advisory Council members believed there was a lack of transparency with assessment planning and activities that prevented faculty learning from each, hampered student engagement, and resulted in less accountability. The Chair of the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences brought to the attention of the Advisory Council the NILOA

Transparency Framework. After careful investigation and analysis of the NILOA standards, it was agreed the Transparency Framework would take PLNU assessment to the next level. In the summer of 2011 the appropriate standing committees were consulted and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness sought permission from [NILOA to adopt the transparency framework.](#)

The WASC Advisory Council then began in the fall of 2011 to identify ways to adapt the framework to PLNU's assessment purposes. The three department chairs serving on the Advisory Council were the first to volunteer to use the framework as a repository for their assessment activities and plans ([Assessment Wheels](#), [Psychology](#), [Kinesiology](#), [Mathematical, Information and Computer Sciences](#)). These three department chairs recently completed program review and immediately saw the benefit of making public and storing these assessment artifacts and evidence of student learning in the Assessment Wheel. The Assessment Wheel has been widely recognized by faculty as an effective way to communicate the whole cycle of assessment from departmental mission through to program improvement. Because the wheel represents the same information previously submitted in an [Annual Assessment Report](#), the Wheel has replaced the report and will be updated by each academic unit throughout the year. The Wheel more effectively communicates the continuous improvement culture important to program improvement. It also systematizes information and creates a more sustainable process by reducing work for department faculty since only the portion of the wheel that has changed needs to be updated.

In order to assist faculty and staff in populating the sections of the Assessment Wheel for their academic unit, the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council created a online manual called the [Assessment Cycle Guidelines](#) and [User's Guide](#) (available as a PDF file) that explained how to upload information into the academic unit's Assessment Wheel. It also listed required and suggested supporting documents for each hexagon. In addition, since the Wheels for Psychology and Kinesiology

were populated before the wheel was introduced to the rest of the faculty to upload their documents, then faculty had a visual example of the kinds of documents and supporting information they could use for their wheels. Initially, the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation worked with individual departments who volunteered to move assessment documents into their new Assessment Wheel. However, once the process began, the faculty and staff quickly migrated years of assessment plans and activities to the new platform. For those beginning Program Review, this was an excellent opportunity to conduct an inventory and identify any missing data, assessment gaps, or areas needing improvement. (examples: [School of Education](#), [Biology](#), [Family and Consumer Science](#), [History and Political Science](#), and [Art and Design](#)).

One of the more interesting contributions of the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council was the addition of the center hexagon, [Points of Distinction](#). Each academic unit has used this section to profile their programs in unique ways. Some academic units display artifacts representing student scholarship and student success stories. Other academic units use the Points of Distinction section to highlight faculty scholarly and professional interests. Additionally, some academic units describe through pictures or vignettes about their unique community and opportunities for student in the academic programs. It is believed that this section above all others will draw students to the Assessment Wheels (examples: [Mathematical, Information and Computer Sciences](#); [Physics and Engineering](#); [Kinesiology](#); [Biology](#); [School of Education graduate programs](#); [Family and Consumer Sciences](#); and [Literature, Journalism and Modern Languages](#)).

The high visibility of the Assessment Wheel reinforces to the PLNU community the value the University places on the assessment of student learning that leads to student success. Links to the Assessment Wheel are clearly visible by way of the [Assessment Wheel logo](#) displayed on the front page of each academic unit's home page throughout the University web pages. Students and parents, as well

as others visiting the web site, can easily navigate to the Assessment Wheels. This complete transparency also creates accountability within the University, and visually depicts the connections between mission, learning outcomes, planning, assessment activities, and program improvement.

Once faculty began loading their documents into the wheel, many found novel uses for the wheel that assisted them in other areas. For example, [Art and Design](#) faculty have all of their signature assignments and rubrics loaded into the wheel for easy access for adjunct faculty and students.

[Biology's Wheel](#) includes rubrics and samples of highly developed reflective essays. [Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences](#) has created a unique curricular map beginning with the Institutional Learning Outcomes and Mission and maps program learning outcomes to the university mission, institutional learning outcomes, assessment plan, criteria for success, and specific assessment activities administered in the program's courses. Other departments have adapted this curriculum map model and are thereby learning from each other, continually working to improve the programs offered and the assessment process.

Assessment Action (3) – Assessment Capacity Building Activities

As part of the University's commitment to assessing student learning outcomes, the University has hosted several events and activities to intentionally develop assessment capacity among staff. For example, over the last two years 20 faculty from 12 different academic units have been sponsored to attend [assessment conferences or workshops](#) (e.g., WASC Program Review, AAC&U GE Assessment, WASC Student Success, etc.). In addition, the University has widely sponsored faculty in departments with professional accreditation to participate in these accrediting bodies' annual conferences and assessment workshops. Other capacity-building activities have included campus workshops, seminars, guest experts, and publications described previously. In addition, the University sponsored the Director

of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness's participation in the first WASC Assessment Leadership Academy, and is now sponsoring a faculty member's participation in the Academy.

In the early years of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Director held faculty development workshops with each academic unit in order to assist them in developing mission statements, learning outcomes, curriculum maps, assessment plans, rubrics, assessment activities, etc. To further expand the assessment capacity of curricular and co-curricular departments, the University hosted Dr. Mary Allen, a higher education consultant and WASC Assessment Leadership Academy professor, on campus to offer assessment workshops. Dr. Allen's workshops in [spring 2011](#) and [fall 2011](#) were very well attended by faculty and staff and received excellent evaluations. These working sessions reinforced the excellent work already being done in assessment as well as addressed questions and helped clarify assessment issues.

The Provost and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness have also hosted the [Review and Renewal workshops](#) for faculty to assist them in developing assessment plans and activities for the upcoming semester. Academic units who would like assistance submit projects they will be working on in the assessment workshop, and an assessment faculty mentor with extensive assessment experience is assigned to assist each academic unit's faculty. The faculty from the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences department assist faculty with converting qualitative and indirect assessment evidence into meaningful data. Lunch is provided for attendees and many of the academic units have had both full-time faculty and adjuncts present. Some academic units have used these working sessions to review and revise assessment plans, tools, and activities.

For those academic units needing additional assistance, individual all day assessment work sessions are held and faculty outside the academic unit with assessment experience volunteer to attend. For example, the School of Theology and Christian Ministry needed to update their learning

outcomes as well as fill assessment gaps in preparation for program review. The College Dean hosted a Saturday work session along with the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation and the Chair of the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences, and all projects identified by the School of Theology and Christian Ministry for the work session were completed. The School Dean believes the assessment work day format was so successful that another is scheduled for the fall 2012 semester.

Significant progress has been made over the past five years as is evidenced in the [Assessment of the Assessment Reports](#). These reports represent an aggregate of the academic units' progress in the development of assessment plans and activities based on rubrics created by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee assessed the elements of the assessment planning (criteria included mission statement, Student Learning Outcomes, curriculum map, assessment plan, and alignment of Learning Outcomes to Mission), and the elements of assessment activities (criteria included methods of assessment, indirect and direct measures, criteria for success, evidence collected, conclusions and recommendations, and closing the loop with programmatic changes). In the three years beginning with the academic year 2008-2009, there has been steady improvement in both assessment planning and assessment activities. On all measures there was only one slight decline (2009-10 is 92%: 2010-2011 is 85%) in the area of direct and indirect measures of assessment. However, it is believed that as the result of additional training, the expectations of the evaluators increased significantly over the years. In addition, feedback from academic department leaders made it clear that the rubrics used for assessing the assessment process needed clarification and improvement.

In addition, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee [evaluators](#) provided each academic unit scorecards (examples: [Chemistry](#), [Communication and Theatre](#), [Education](#), and [Nursing](#)) with

recommendations for improving their assessment plans and activities. The assessment scorecard criteria included an evaluation of the academic unit's (a) mission statement, (b) definition of program learning outcomes (PLOs), (c) alignment of PLOs to the University mission, (d) development of the PLOs, (e) alignment of PLOs on the curriculum map, (f) multi-year assessment plan, (g) methods of assessment, (h) criteria for success, (i) direct and indirect measures, (j) collection of evidence, (k) analysis of results, (l) conclusions-implications-recommendations, and (m) planning change. In early fall 2011 the Director of Institutional Effectiveness hosted a review of the progress academic assessment which provided an overview of the progress academic units have made and pointed specific attention to those areas where improvements could be addressed.

During the 2011-12 academic year the Institutional Effectiveness Committee significantly improved the assessment rubrics. These new rubrics place a greater emphasis on the use of evidence of student learning to make curricular improvements (rubrics: [assessment planning](#) and [assessment activities](#)). Because of the great progress faculty have made on assessment planning and activities and the move to the Assessment Wheel, the assessment of the assessment process was changed for the 2011-2012 academic year. During the summer of 2012 faculty within each academic unit used the revised assessment rubrics to evaluate their progress (2012 assessment of the assessment wheels: [Education summary](#); [MS Nursing](#); [Family Consumer Science](#); [Math, Information and Computer Science](#); [Physics](#); and [Liberal Studies](#)). Academic department leaders believe self-evaluation will lead to greater learning, build capacity, and strengthen faculty ownership. Faculty are also encouraged to invite a faculty member outside their immediate program to also assess the quality of the assessment (assessment coordinators 2012-13). A faculty workshop was held in June 2012 to train faculty how to lead a rubric calibration exercise for the Assessment Wheel.

Assessment Action (4) – General Education, Graduation Proficiencies, and Degree Qualification Profile

General Education

At the time of the WASC EER visit in 2007 the University had gone through a process of establishing a list of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (EEI's) that consisted of a number of general education learning outcomes. The University, under the leadership of the General Education Committee and the Dean of General Education, established a set of general learning outcomes and from these created specific Educational Effectiveness Indicators. Details of the development process can be found in the relevant sections of [PLNU's CPR](#) and [EER reports](#). The Educational Effectiveness Indicators (2007) can be seen in the attached document ([Educational Effectiveness Indicators 2007](#)).

EEI 4 was aimed at program learning outcomes for majors and was not assessed by the General Education Committee. After additional work and consideration, it was determined that EEIs 9-12 would need to be re-written because the preliminary ideas for how to assess these items did not work effectively. An additional item related to critical thinking was added to the list of indicators. The EEIs related to General Education were assessed through summative exams. This was pilot-tested in the spring of 2004 and the number of students and the number of items assessed was expanded over the next few years. The table below gives the connection between specific EEIs and GE exams.

Educational Effectiveness Indicators Relevant to GE

| Educational Effectiveness Indicators | Data Instrument/Source | GE Test Version |
|---|--|------------------|
| EEI 1: 75% of students will be able to recognize theologically or biblically informed rhetorical elements appearing in non-theological contexts. | Summative GE exam written by the GE Committee | Spring 2005 Exam |
| EEI 2: 75 % of students will be able to articulate a personal spiritual position and place it within a spectrum of Christian traditions. | GE Holistic exam constructed by the GE Committee | Spring 2004 Exam |
| EEI 3: 75% of students will be able to interrogate an issue from at least three different disciplinary perspectives. | Summative GE exam written by the GE Committee | Spring 2005 Exam |
| EEI 5: 75% of students will be able to organize ideas to support a position (either in writing or orally) on summative GE exam | GE holistic writing exam constructed by the GE Committee | Spring 2004 Exam |
| EEI 6: 75% of students will be able to present logical objections to their own position. This will be shown on a summative GE exam. | GE holistic writing exam constructed by the GE Committee | Spring 2004 Exam |
| EEI 7: 75% of students will be able to apply quantitative methods to solving real-life problems. | Summative GE exam written by the GE Committee | Spring 2005 Exam |
| EEI 8: 75% of students will be able to interrogate an issue from a different racial, class or gender position as shown on a summative GE exam. | Summative GE exam written by the GE Committee | Spring 2006 Exam |
| EEI 13: 75% of students will demonstrate the ability and willingness to balance the varied aspects of their lives as shown on a senior year assessment exam. | Summative GE exam written by the GE Committee | Spring 2006 Exam |
| Critical Thinking* : 75% of students will demonstrate the ability to read and think critically. | Summative GE exam written by the GE Committee | Spring 2006 Exam |

*Note that critical thinking did not appear as one of the original EEI's but it was decided to add an additional question to the 2006 version of the exam to cover that area.

One exam was given each year in spring of 2004, spring of 2005, and spring of 2006. After this initial development stage, part or all of two of the three exams were given in spring 2007, spring 2008,

and spring 2009. Details about the rotation, number of students taking each version of the exam, rubrics, and the assessment data can be found in the [GE Assessment Wheel](#).

The University has approximately 525 graduating seniors each year and by 2006 more than half of those each year's graduates participated in taking the GE exam. Though disaggregation of the data by major and by transfer/non-transfer student does not have much statistical significance because of the small sample size (there are 54 possible majors at PLNU), limited disaggregation of the data seemed to indicate that some of the prompts used for evaluating the EEIs were biased towards particular disciplines. For example, the diversity question was asked in a way that is much more similar to the day to day academic work of a student in the humanities than the day to day work of a student in the sciences. In addition, after exams were scored, it became clear that some of the prompts needed a greater level of specificity about the type of answer expected.

As part of the continuous improvement in PLNU's processes for the assessment of student learning, it was recognized in 2009 that the institution would be well served by having a set of Institutional Learning Outcomes to help unify programmatic student learning outcomes. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee worked on developing these outcomes over an 18-month period and the final outcomes were approved by the faculty in November of 2010 ([Institutional Learning Outcomes](#)).

While the Institutional Effectiveness Committee was working on Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), the General Education Committee worked for many months to develop an updated set of General Education Learning outcomes that connected with the ILOs. The committee also incorporated many of the ideas contained in the AAC&U's Essential Learning Outcomes. The final version of these [General Education Learning Outcomes](#) was approved by the faculty in December of 2010, shortly after the approval of the final version of the ILOs.

Each academic department was asked to match their general education courses with these learning outcomes ([**GE LOs linked to GE courses**](#)). Further work was done to match these outcomes with the [**AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes**](#), and their associated rubrics to help provide support for assessing general education.

Since PLNU first began the process of updating the General Education Learning Outcomes, three key things have happened in higher education: (1) AAC&U has created and pilot tested Value Rubrics to assist with assessing general learning outcomes; (2) the Degree Qualification Profile has been developed and is being pilot tested by the following academic units: Mathematical, Information and Computer Science; Literature, Journalism, and Modern Language; Business and Liberal Studies. PLNU is participating in both the CIC and WASC pilot tests; and (3) WASC has reemphasized the need to assess: oral and written communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, and critical thinking.

In addition, our internal analysis has led to the conclusion that the complex and compound wording of our learning outcomes have made them a challenge to measure. The General Education Committee is currently discussing ways to refine the learning outcomes to create better linkages between our General Education learning outcomes and available assessment tools (AAC&U and others).

While this process of refining the GE learning outcomes has been underway, there has been some pilot testing of ways to assess core skills in a limited number of general education classes. The University has assessed students in the following areas ([**GE Assessment Wheel, Evidence of Student Learning**](#)):

- Oral Communication (COM100) (2011-present)
- Written Communication (WRI110) (2011-present)
- Quantitative Reasoning (MTH144, MTH164 and MTH303) (2007-present)
- Diversity (PSY100) (2009-present)

All of these assessments have been conducted as part of embedded assignments in the courses listed. Based on the assessment process, the prompts and rubrics have been modified over time to allow for more accurate assessment of student work and responses. Further details including rubrics and data can be found in the GE assessment wheel.

A second source of data examined by the University has been student learning data derived from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Research indicates that NSSE Benchmark scores are a reasonable proxy for some key general education outcomes (Pascarella, et al., "How Effective are the NSSE Benchmarks in Predicting Important Educational Outcomes?", *Change*, January 2010). This article indicates that, based on results from the Wabash Study, there are relationships between the five NSSE Benchmarks:

- Level of Academic Challenge,
- Active and Collaborative Learning,
- Student-Faculty Interaction,
- Enriching Educational Experiences,
- Supportive Campus Environment, and

Several critical general learning outcomes:

- Effective Reasoning and Problem Solving
- Moral Character
- Inclination to Inquire and Lifelong Learning
- Intercultural Effectiveness
- Personal Well-Being

The PLNU NSSE Benchmark data along with comparator institution data can be found in the [GE](#)

Assessment Wheel. Though this data provides an indirect measure of general learning outcomes, it is helpful in that there is comparator data available. As part of the creation of the PLNU survey panel process (tracking students for their years at PLNU and 15 years after graduation), the frequency of NSSE administration at PLNU has been increased to once every three years. This action will further strengthen this data set.

The third source of data comes from nationally normed exams. Because it was unclear which of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) or the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Proficiency Profile might best support the University's desire to be able to benchmark general learning, it was determined that a pilot test would be conducted in 2011-12, and both exams would be used to a randomly selected group of freshmen and seniors. This pilot was conducted, and the University concluded that the ETS Proficiency Profile would better serve our needs. Further information about the process can be seen in the next section (Graduation Proficiencies) of this report.

Graduation Proficiencies

Over the past several years the faculty have discussed the challenges of assessing and finding comparator data for key intellectual skills such as critical thinking, writing, oral communication, quantitative skills, and information literacy. While all of these intellectual skills are assessed in the general education courses, these courses are usually taken during the first two years of an undergraduate's academic career. Assessment of the intellectual skills at the end of a student's degree program is more uneven. For example, while most departments have specific assessment assignments for oral and written communication, this is not always true for quantitative skills. In the summer 2011 it was determined that the University would evaluate the use of a nationally normed test to be given just prior to a student's graduation.

The University considered a variety of standardized tests and decided to pilot the ETS Proficiency Profile and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) with both incoming freshmen and graduating seniors. In the fall of 2011 175 incoming freshman participated in the CLA and ETS assessments and in the spring of 2012 100 graduating seniors participated in each the CLA and ETS. A total of 63% (319 students) of the graduating seniors were involved in an Institutional assessment activity. A review of the CLA and ETS testing results indicated two critical pieces of information: (a) more of PLNU's comparator and aspirant schools are using the [ETS Proficiency Profile](#) as a measure of graduation proficiencies, and (b) the results from the ETS exam appear to be easier to use for curricular improvement. In particular, it is helpful that reading/critical thinking, writing, and mathematics are assessed at three levels with each level clearly defined.

After careful analysis, it was decided the University will use the ETS Proficiency Profile as one measure of graduation proficiencies for the period 2011 through 2016. Adopting a nationally normed test addresses the issue that not all skills are going to be measured by all programs as part of their end of program assessments. For example, it is unlikely that a culminating experience in a Literature program is going to measure quantitative skills.

The University is also participating in two pilot programs related to the Degree Qualification Profile (DQP). PLNU competed to be accepted in the first pilot, which is being conducted by the Council for Independent Colleges (CIC). Funded by Lumina, the CIC is providing extensive resources and support for this program. PLNU is also participating in the WASC pilot of the use of DQP. The University's project is to consider how to best measure student proficiency in key intellectual skills in the culminating experience for each academic program. For more information, see the following section on Degree Qualification Profile.

Degree Qualification Profile

The release of Lumina's [Degree Qualification Profile](#) expanded conversations on the PLNU campus about the "meaning of a degree" and how that meaning might connect with our general learning outcomes. In early fall 2011 the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation and the Special Assistant to the President for Planning met with the President's Administrative Cabinet to discuss the opportunity to apply for the Lumina-sponsored pilot program with the Council of Independent Colleges and with WASC. The Cabinet supported both of these applications and PLNU has been invited to participate ([PLNU's CIC interim action plan for the DQP pilot](#) and [Interim Report July 27, 2012](#)).

PLNU's specific [DQP project](#) has gone through several iterations and now focuses on assessing broad learning outcomes in the capstone or culminating experience for each program. The DQP includes learning outcomes represented in both the general education and the major courses. This project has many challenges, but they are illuminating and have sparked some important conversation. For example, not all PLNU programs have a culminating experience, and for those that do, the credit hours assigned to the experience vary significantly among programs. In addition, the DQP Task Force has encountered a wide range of definitions and expectations for key terms such as capstone, culminating experience, senior seminar, information literacy, critical thinking, etc. Therefore, the Task Force has begun work on [defining common terms](#).

As a starting point the Academic Council completed a [survey](#) identifying which graduation proficiencies they assess, and where and how those graduation proficiencies are assessed in each of the academic programs. The survey and the results of the ETS and CLA pilot program will be a central topic in the Academic Council planning for the 2012-2013 academic year. In addition, discussion has begun

with department leaders about the need to use common rubrics for the assessment of core intellectual skills (written and oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, and critical thinking).

The University's participation in these two DQP pilots will further strengthen the assessment of the undergraduate majors, and will give the faculty important end-of-program assessment evidence about both major-specific material and general knowledge. It will also provide PLNU opportunities to be engaged in an important conversation in higher education about the meaning of the degree. At this preliminary stage the focus has been primarily on undergraduate degree programs. However, the directors of the graduate programs have been encouraged to look at the potential for assessing the graduate level learning outcomes.

Assessment Action (5) – Co-curricular Assessment

PLNU has a somewhat unique co-curricular administrative structure. Because of the deep Christian emphasis in our mission, the co-curricular function is divided between the Office of Student Development and the Office of Spiritual Development. Each of these offices is led by a University Vice President. Since the last WASC review these offices have undergone significant staffing changes, which have included changes in both vice presidential leadership and assessment coordinators in both offices.

Unit leaders in each co-curricular area (see the organizational charts for further details: [Student Development](#) and [Spiritual Development](#)) have responsibility for the assessment and modification of the programs in their area of responsibility. In addition, the Offices of Spiritual and Student Development each have a designated assessment coordinator. These assessment coordinators are the co-curricular representatives on the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and have actively participated in the review and renewal of assessment activities, the adoption of the NILOA assessment wheel, and the building of institutional capacity described in the previous sections of this report (assessment wheel

[Student Development](#) and [Spiritual Development](#)). Various members of the co-curricular leadership team have participated in co-curricular assessment workshops sponsored by WASC and Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and Dr. Mary Allen's visits to PLNU have included specific sessions devoted to assessing co-curricular programs.

All areas of Student and Spiritual Development have gathered data about their programs and participants for several years. They have also reviewed best practices and current research about students and student learning. For many years Student Development has compiled an annual report (examples: [Public Safety](#) and [Wellness Center](#)) that includes all data and an executive summary. Spiritual Development has not had as formal a reporting process as Student Development. However, the offices of both Student and Spiritual Development are now using the same assessment wheel format as all academic programs and will be uploading data annually. This means that co-curricular programs have: (a) program learning outcomes aligned to the University mission, (b) program maps (e.g., maps linking outcomes to particular activities), (c) assessment plans, (d) means for assessing outcomes, (e) assessment data, and (f) an opportunity to reflect on the data to make program improvements.

Though there have been a variety of types of formal and informal reports for co-curricular assessment, what is consistent throughout is the use of data for program improvement. For example, PLNU's Community Ministries and Discipleship Ministries (both in the Office of Spiritual Development) used observations of leader interactions as well as leader feedback to modify the training of student leaders. Further details can be found in the section Annual Assessment – Use of Assessment in Decision Making.

The Office of Strengths and Vocation was created by the Office of Student Development to strengthen ties between PLNU and the local business community, and to help students prepare for the world of work (by teaching networking, interviewing, and resume-building skills, etc.). This new office

incorporated and expanded existing career planning programs. The creation of the office was based on research into best practices in higher education and the programs conducted by this office are shaped by ongoing assessment and evaluation. A specific example of one such program is Network 9, an opportunity for students to learn field-specific networking skills and to make connections. The development of this program is discussed in the section Annual Assessment – Use of Assessment in Decision Making.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes – Next Steps

- *University and Academic Centers and Institutes Assessment and Program Review –*
The University Centers and Institutes have [completed annual reports for 2011-12 \(online\)](#). The Centers are working with the Program Review Committee to develop a robust Program Review process and guidelines. As part of that process they will fully develop their learning outcomes and means of assessment and will begin to build a longitudinal data set. Eventually, these annual reports and the associated assessment evidence will form the basis for the creation of an Assessment Wheel for Centers and Institutes. In the 2014-15 academic year the Program Review cycle for the centers will commence. As with the academic departments, the Centers will undergo program review on a six-year cycle.
- *Assessment Wheel –* The faculty and co-curricular staff will continue to update and improve the assessment plans and activities that document assessment and use of evidence of student learning for continuous improvement. They will identify and address gaps and unevenness in assessment practices. These reports will be due each fall semester and become part of the assessment plan displayed in the Assessment Wheel.

- *Assessment Wheel and Program Review* – The Assessment Wheel is the repository for all assessment data needed for Program Review and for supporting curricular changes and new program development. Over the upcoming year the academic unit faculty will work closely with the Program Review Committee and the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation to closely link the Assessment Wheel, Program Review self-study report, and resource allocation. In a similar manner, the co-curricular staff will work with the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation in further developing and supporting the co-curricular program review process.

- *Curricular changes* – The curricular committees have worked closely with faculty to link curricular changes to evidence from the assessment of student learning outcomes and to guild standards and best practices. With the transparency of evidence of student learning in the assessment wheel, this effort has gained momentum and will be refined over the coming academic year.

- *Calendaring Assessment* – The Provost has appointed a calendar task force to review several calendaring issues, including the appropriate scheduling of time for assessment each semester. One model under consideration would set aside a half-day reserved for assessment related to the academic major and general education and set aside the other half dedicated to institutional surveys and assessment. This will also greatly benefit the co-curricular programs that find it challenging to identify opportunities for assessing and surveying student learning and opinions.

- *Office of Institutional Effectiveness* – Based on the recommendations made by the IR/IE consultant and on research into best practices, the office restructuring has been vetted and job descriptions have been approved and posted for the new positions in the

summer 2012. The new office will be an expansion of the Office of the Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation and be represented on the Provost Council and Academic Council

- *Institutional Effectiveness Committee* – The initial charge of the IE Committee was to build momentum and capacity for assessment across campus. While these important roles continue, the Committee and Provost will develop a long-term plan that supports the academic units in the next five year phase of assessment practices. This will include working with the Program Review Committee and curricular committees and supporting the PLNU's academic prioritization initiatives.
- *Capacity Building* – The University has sponsored faculty and staff participation in WASC and guild-led workshops on assessment. As part of our continuing efforts to develop capacity, faculty and staff members will be participating in a number of WASC workshops in 2012-13 as well as attending sessions on assessment sponsored by their professional organizations. In addition, the University will have some on-campus capacity-building activities (see Review and Renewal below).
- *Review and Renewal Work Sessions* – The Review and Renewal work session at the beginning of each semester has been very successful. It provides an opportunity to answer assessment questions, review the excellent work being done on the Assessment Wheels, and focus faculty and staff attention on the currency and effectiveness of their combined assessment activities. These sessions will continue until the faculty and staff believe they do not serve a useful function. These sessions are an excellent way to build assessment capacity and to reinforce the importance the University places on the continuous updating and renewal of the assessment activities.

- *Assessment Coordinators* – The Assessment Coordinators (assessment coordinators [2011-12](#) and [2012-13](#)) have played an important role in building the assessment capacity within the University. The Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation is working on a five-year plan to support and train these key individuals. This includes resourcing with new publications, hosting periodic luncheons to discuss assessment issues, paying for WASC assessment training, encouraging faculty with strong assessment backgrounds to become part of PLNU's already large contingent of WASC reviewers, supporting individual program's assessment initiatives, and providing online support such as an assessment discussion board. One example of program initiative is the Modern Language faculty have developed a two-year plan for the full-time faculty to obtain proficiency assessment certification by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

ISSUE NO 2: NEW PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/ PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) introduced the first formal Program Review process in 1990. The first Program Review Guidelines were released in the 1992-1993 academic year and laid out the requirements for a successful Program Review. This initial phase of outlining a formal Program Review process was used by academic units to guide them through the initial assessment of the academic programs. In 1994, program reviews became an integral part of assessment at PLNU when the academic deans and chairpersons approved a formal plan for program review. An ad hoc committee was formed to develop assessment strategies.

In PLNU's Capacity Preparedness Review (CPR) of October 2006, it was noted that, "In 1994, Dr. David Strawn, Dean of Liberal Arts, developed a 5-year program review system after substantial research of post-tenure review processes and program improvement systems at other schools in the Council of

Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Subsequently, no academic department could submit curricular changes without completing a well-researched, evidence-based program review that grounded their curricular recommendations. For many departments, program review resulted in substantial program improvement or development. The Department of Business, for example, sought and achieved professional program accreditation from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) in 2000, based on its 1995-1996 program review. Several other similar professional accreditations were later sought and achieved through the program review process, including Athletic Training (2003), Music (2003) and Dietetics (2005)."

An ad hoc Assessment Committee was created in 1994 and Dr. David Strawn, Dean of Arts and Sciences, was named the chair. The committee agreed upon a definition of assessment, started an inventory, and joined the CCCU program review project. In preparation for the 1996 WASC visit, the ad hoc Assessment Committee prepared a report entitled, "Assessment at Point Loma Nazarene College," which contained an assessment plan, expected uses of assessment data, an assessment inventory and resulting changes, assessment instruments in use, and future directions.

PLNU's first five-year program review system was instituted in 1999-96. This would later become known as Department Review Cycle 1 ([Cycle 1 and 2 model](#)). The last department to conduct a review under Cycle 1 guidelines finished its review in the 2001-02 academic year. No departmental curricular or program changes could be made until Cycle 1 reviews were completed. The Cycle 1 PLNU Department/Program Review model provided specific content and directives for the academic departments.

As reported in the University's Educational Effectiveness Review, October 3-5, 2007, the Cycle 2 model was introduced in 2001. This model was a modified version of the Cycle 1 set of guidelines. The new guidelines placed a greater emphasis on the use of assessment data. This cycle of review was

designed to assess the current status of each department, evaluate curricular trends, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set a clear direction for the future. In some cases, Cycle 2 program reviews were used to “fine tune” changes made after Cycle 1. In other programs, significant changes were made following Cycle 2 reviews (Mathematical, Information and Computer Science [Cycle 1](#) and [Cycle 2](#) program review). In the interim, departments/schools also had engaged in more informal assessment strategies. By 2002 these strategies were formalized using the Nichols Assessment Model (James O. Nichols, *A Practitioner’s Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation*, Agathon Press: New York, 1995). A full history of this period can be found in the PLNU’s EER report from 2007.

Program Review oversight has historically been the responsibility of the Provost’s Council, with the Dean of Arts and Sciences, who was a member of the Council, providing leadership. The formal PLNU Program Review process was focused only on academic programs. Sometime after the Institutional Effectiveness Committee was formed in 2008, the Committee briefly assumed responsibility for Program Review oversight with the expectation that the formal review would also include the University Centers and the co-curricular programs. However, with all of the responsibilities for Institution-wide assessment, it became clear that it was not practical for the IE Committee to keep responsibility for Program Review. So the responsibility for program review returned to the Provost’s Council, and that body developed an [outline for a new Program Review](#) process that was pilot tested in the 2009-10 (Program Review Process at PLU) academic year. During this time it became clear that the best support for academic program review (including Centers) would be provided by a faculty committee with specific oversight of the Program Review process, and that the co-curricular program review process would need to be handled through different channels.

In the fall of 2010, the PLNU faculty determined that a permanent [Program Review Committee](#) should be formed to complete the revision of the Program Review process. The newly formed Program Review Committee was designed to serve both academic units and University Centers and Institutes, to oversee the review process, and to provide recommendations of their findings to the Provost. The faculty selected the first members of the Committee and approved a general description of their charter. The Program Review Committee initially met in spring 2011 with the purpose of updating and Program Review process and guidelines. The [Academic Program Review Guidelines](#) document and the Academic Program Review Self Study Template are the products of the Committee's actions.

The Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation has been designated to work with the co-curricular programs to better support their assessment and program review activities. As part of the process of developing the academic guidelines and template, it was recognized that there would need to be a modified program review process for [co-curricular units](#); this was drafted in summer 2012 and is currently under review.

Program Review Action (1) – Formation of an Academic Program Review Committee

As described above, for all but a short period of time, oversight of the program review process was under the domain of the Provost's Council (Provost, College Deans, and Vice Provosts). In the 2008-09 academic year the Provost's Council began the process of redesigning the process for academic program review. By the spring of 2009 this process was ready for pilot testing and the pilot was done by the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences ([Phase I](#) and [Phase II](#)). In the fall of 2010, as a result of the pilot test, further revisions were made and the updated set of guidelines were used by the [Department of Psychology](#) and the [Department of Kinesiology](#) as they began their program review. In fall 2010, under the leadership of the Interim Provost, the faculty began work on the development of a separate committee for academic program review. In spring 2011 the newly formed

Program Review Committee began its work on completing the revision of the program review process Guidelines and master schedule).

The new Program Review Committee was charged with the responsibility for supporting, guiding, and assessing the program review process. The Program Review Committee is elected by the faculty or appointed by the Provost and works with the academic program faculty and administrative leadership to ensure the alignment of the program review process with institutional learning outcomes, mission, core values, and planning processes. Throughout the program review process the Program Review Committee assists the academic unit faculty. The Committee makes recommendations to the Provost regarding the quality of the program review process, academic leadership structure, assessment processes, curricular programs, efficiency, program review findings, and other elements of the self-study. The Committee also works with each academic unit's team of external reviewers.

The Program Review Committee meets every other week and Committee members work closely in supporting the academic unit faculty in preparing the program self-study. There is a representative from each of the curricular committees, Academic Policy Committee, and Graduate Studies Committee, serving on the Academic Program Review Committee. This provides important linkage among the three committees and prepares the curricular committees for proposals working their way through the program review process. Each academic unit is assigned a member of the Committee as a liaison between the academic unit and the Committee. This process has worked very effectively. The liaison meets with the academic unit leadership several times throughout the process and is the primary author for the reports from the Program Review Committee to the academic unit.

Program Review Action (2) – Academic Program Review Guidelines and Templates created

During the 2008-09 academic year the University began the process of updating the Academic Program Review by drafting a set of guidelines based on the three-phase WASC review process: proposal, capacity review, and educational effectiveness review. During that period the Department of [Biology](#) conducted a program review using the old (Cycle 2) set of guidelines. A pilot test of the 2009 draft of the new guidelines was conducted by the Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences during the 2009-10 academic year. As the result of that pilot test, it became clear that the process needed to be streamlined and simplified. The University then sent a group of faculty and administrators to the WASC Program Review Workshop in fall 2010. The Workshop attendees included the Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, the Interim Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies, the Chair of the Department of Kinesiology, and the Dean of the School of Theology and Christian Ministry. Following the workshop the attendees combined their conference notes and began to develop a comprehensive research folder with examples of current best practices in program review. In addition, several universities with exemplary program review processes were contacted for guidance. This body of literature formed the basis of the information used to transform the pilot process outline into the initial draft of the new Academic Program Review Guidelines.

The new [Academic Program Review Guidelines](#) included elements that had not systematically been part of the old Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 systems of program review. These items include: (a) budget request form for conducting the program review, (b) Memorandum of Understanding guidelines, (c) external review team Letter of Agreement with expectations, (d) external review team report template, (e) self-study template, (f) suggested two-year program review schedule, (g) findings and recommendations template, (h) self-study rubric, (i) glossary, (j) rotation schedule, (k) Action Plan template, etc. The Academic Program Review Guidelines without appendices have been distributed among the faculty in hard copy. The Guidelines and all supporting documentation are available online.

Program review self-studies are available online in the Assessment Wheel of the respective academic unit.

All members of the Program Review Committee were involved in the writing and editing of the current version of the Academic Program Review documents. These members represented a wide range of academic disciplines as well as graduate and undergraduate degree programs in order to bring these perspectives to the project. Early drafts were released to faculty piloting the Academic Program Review and their feedback was incorporated in the final document. For example, with the Department of Psychology Program Review it took several weeks to receive the report of the External Review Team. Such a delay extends the completion of the process and puts at risk new program proposals meeting the curricular committee deadlines. Therefore, the Committee redesigned the program review guidelines with a new External Review Schedule and instructions. The revised guidelines require the report be submitted to the Provost prior to the Team's departure ([PLNU Program Review master schedule](#)).

The most innovative change in the new Guidelines is the addition of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in the Program Review process. The MOU formalizes an agreement between the academic unit and the Institution and clarifies mutual expectations about how the findings from the program review should be addressed. The MOU contains two parts: (a) the action plan for the academic unit to improve the program with specific targets, and (b) a commitment from the Administrative Cabinet to provide the resources needed for the specific programmatic improvements described in the MOU. The MOU is linked to future budgeting, planning, and resource allocation as well as contains a timeline for program changes and provides a means of accountability since in most cases the academic unit is required to submit annual progress reports. The Academic Unit is required to work closely with the administrative staff, including the Associate Vice President for Budgeting and Accounting, the Associate Vice President for Admissions, the Chief Information Officer, the Office of Records, the

Provost's Council, and others as needed to identify the resource implications for program improvements indicated in the MOU. Further details can be seen in the [**MOU Template**](#) and Instructions.

The Academic Program Review Guidelines were officially released by the Provost in hard copy and online to the Academic Council in spring 2012. The Guidelines were then distributed to the faculty and are accessible online.

Program Review Action (3) – Revised Academic Program Review Process Piloted

PLNU takes an experimental approach to developing new processes. In the three years that it took to develop the new Academic Program Review guidelines, three academic departments conducted reviews using the guidelines, which enabled them to provide feedback on the process. In 2009-10 the Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences department conducted an Academic Program Review using the 2009 framework. That feedback went into the development of the next draft of the framework. The Departments of Psychology and Kinesiology piloted the second draft of the new Academic Program Review process during the 2011-2012 academic year while the guidelines were still being written. Even though this concurrent process created confusion for those departments involved in the Academic Program Review pilot, their assistance and continuous feedback was invaluable in informing the process. The Chair of the Department of Psychology, the Chair of the Department of Kinesiology, and the Chair of the Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences Department all serve on the WASC Interim Report Advisory Council, and their program review experience was important for informing the WASC interim report preparation. In reflection, the academic unit faculty believe they are much better and stronger than before the process. Psychology had an excellent External Review process where the [**External Review Team**](#) was able to fully engage students in the process. Kinesiology went through a transformative process when faculty came together as a single unit to plan a new degree program and eliminate a program that had declining enrollment. Mathematical,

Information, and Computer Sciences worked with all scientific departments to develop an interdisciplinary minor in [Computational Science](#).

During the 2012-2013 academic year there will be several academic units representing a wide swath of undergraduate majors beginning or completing the Academic Program Review process. Academic units currently in some stage of the Program Review process include: Kinesiology; Business; School of Theology and Christian Ministry; Art and Design; Communication and Theatre; Literature, Journalism, and Modern Language; History and Political Science; Sociology and Social Work; and General Education. University Centers and Institutes are building the capacity to undergo program review. To build that capacity, the Centers are being asked to turn in annual reports (examples: [Center for International Development](#), [Center for Teaching and Learning](#), [Center for Justice and Reconciliation](#), and [Center for Women's Studies](#)). Formal program review for the Centers and Institutes will begin in the 2014-15 academic year. It is expected that as the Academic Program Review process continues to gain momentum, the quality of the process itself will continue to make great improvements and will embed itself further into institutional life.

Program Review is an integral part of the University's learning process by which we assess the quality of our programs and continually adjust to improve their effectiveness and currency with the objective of improving student learning. The program review process is an opportunity for the faculty and staff of each academic program to assess its success in meeting internally defined outcomes and to externally benchmark itself to comparable and exemplary programs. The University's commitment to continual improvement as a learning community drives its reflective processes. PLNU is committed to equipping faculty and staff to equip them for the tasks associated with continuous assessment and reflection. This includes investing in sending faculty and administrators to [Program Review workshops](#), [seminars and conferences](#); inviting special speakers on campus with Program Review expertise;

providing links to key resources such as new publications and online resources; and providing a Program Review Committee liaison to answer questions and to address the academic unit's unique needs.

Program Review Action (4) – Co-curricular Program Review

PLNU has invested most of its energy into developing a well-formed Academic Program Review system. However, recognizing the importance of Co-curricular Program Review, the Institution has begun to develop a more formalized review process for co-curricular programs. As indicated in the section on co-curricular assessment, the co-curricular programs have used a variety of methods for documenting assessment and review processes.

Both Spiritual and Student Development have undergone leadership changes since the last WASC review (Fall 2007). As part of those transitions, there has been a review of the overall structure and programmatic offerings of the two units. For example, in Spiritual Development, in order to better meet the spiritual needs of our students, the Director and Associate Director roles were broadened to include being Campus Pastors in order to offer spiritual care to students. The university made a significant shift in hiring a full-time chaplain for undergraduates, while continuing to have a full-time Vice-President of Spiritual Development, who is also an ordained minister. Additionally, the university has hired part-time chaplains to support our graduate students at our regional centers. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the initial responses of the students to this structural change are positive.

The change in leadership in Student Development has brought an increased use of the [CAS standards](#) in their programs' equivalence to a program review [Engagement and Retention Unit](#) (scroll down to the reports titled 2009-2011 Engagement and Retention Parts 1 through 5: Community Life and Student Leadership; International Students Programs and Services; Multicultural Student Programs and Services; Office of Strengths and Vocations; Career Services; Commuter Students; Nicholson Commons;

and Recreation Room) and systematically applies the CAS standards to its eight programs in 2010-11. The findings for each program are presented to the entire Student Engagement and Retention team. Based on this review and the subsequent discussion, programmatic and budgetary changes have been made. One of the places where this can be seen most clearly is in the creation of the Office of Strengths and Vocation. This Office was a re-envisioning of PLNU's Career Center. The Office of Strengths and Vocation has reorganized its staffing and received additional resources to expand its ability to support PLNU undergraduate students in developing professional skills (networking, resume preparation, professional etiquette, etc.). The Office of Strengths and Vocation also develops critical connections between the San Diego business community this has led to both internship and mentoring opportunities for students.

PLNU Athletics is in the domain of Student Development. After a period of evaluation, the University Board made a decision to apply for membership in NCAA Division II and in a new athletic conference. Competition in the new conference begins fall 2012 and full NCAA membership is anticipated by the 2014-15 academic year.

The process of applying to join NCAA Division II involved a wide-ranging self-study of all competitive athletic programs in 2010-11. Similar to a Program Review, the NCAA self-study included an external reviewer. As a result of this study, the Athletic unit was reorganized and the Athletic Director's position was converted into a full-time Director position (previously the Athletic Director was also coaching a team) and a Compliance Officer. The Compliance Office has increased communication between faculty and coaches and introduced increased levels of student accountability for their academic progress.

The Vice Provost for Accreditation and Program Development is working with the Vice President for Student Development and the Vice President for Spiritual Development to formalize the [Co-curricular Program Review process](#). The process description is available online and is being piloted

by both co-curricular units during the 2012-2013 academic year. The revised co-curricular program review process has many things in common with academic program review but also acknowledges that difference between curricular and co-curricular processes. Both co-curricular units have required annual reports, assessment activities and plans, national benchmarking, examination of best practices, and periodic external reviews but have not had the more formalized program review process that includes the memorandum of understanding that links assessment results to budgetary systems.

New Program Development/ Program Review – Next Steps

- *Institutional Research Data Package* – The Program Review Committee and the academic units going through program review have been evaluating whether the data packet currently assembled for program review is adequate. The University recently completed its first filing with the Delaware Study, which gives the University comparator data for benchmarking costs and efficiencies with similar academic programs in the same Carnegie class. This comparator data will be distributed among academic leaders and administrators and will become part of the program review data packet.
- *WASC Program Review Workshop* – All Academic Program Review Committee members have attended the WASC Program Review Workshop, and as they rotate onto the Committee new members will be offered the opportunity to attend the workshop. Costs associated with the workshop are built into the budget. For this academic year 2012-13, PLNU is sending seven faculty from the programs just beginning the program review process.
- *PLNU Strategic Priorities* – Members of the Academic Program Review Committee work closely with Special Assistant to the President for Planning who is also the co-Chair of

the Planning Action Council (the other co-Chair is the University President). The Committee will continue to work with the Planning Action Council to ensure the alignment of new academic program proposals to the Strategic Priorities of the University. In addition, the Program Review Committee and the Planning Action Council will continue to work together on academic prioritization and where necessary the elimination of programs proposed in the program review process.

- *Program Review Process Continuous Improvement* – On April 25th, 2012, the Academic Program Review Committee met with the deans and chairs of the academic units preparing for program review beginning in academic year 2012-2013. The Committee answered questions and carefully reviewed the guidelines. Even though there is a formal evaluation procedure at the end of the two-year cycle, the academic leaders were encouraged to continuously monitor the process and work with their Academic Program Review Committee liaison to improve the process.

- *Academic Prioritization* – Program review is the appropriate process to examine the cost implications for the addition, elimination, or modification of an academic program. Some of the critical ideas from the Prioritization of Academic Programs framework by Robert Dickeson have been built into the program review self-study, and over the next few years this process will be piloted. It is anticipated that asking faculty to reflect on Dickeson's ideas will assist in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programs.

- *Co-Curricular programs pilot the new Program Review* – The variety of different systems for assessing programs and reporting on that assessment in the co-curricular area is unified with the introduction of the assessment wheel. The Co-curricular Program Review is undergoing a pilot test in Student Development by the Student Success and

Wellness Division and in Spiritual Development by the International and Community Ministries program in the 2012-13 academic year. This process is built on what has been learned from co-curricular annual reports, academic program review, and the recent co-curricular reviews. It is anticipated that the process will be modified after the pilot test.

- [University and Academic Center Program Review](#) – In the years 2011-12 through 2013-14 the Centers will continue to provide annual reports, refining the process each year and building internal accountability and external awareness. In these reports they will fully develop their assessment strategies and provide learning outcome data. These three years of work will provide a basis for beginning a six-year cycle of program review for the Centers. The first program reviews will be conducted in the 2014-15 academic year.

ISSUE NO 3: USE OF THE EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING IN DECISION MAKING

At PLNU there are three interconnecting systems that inform program improvement as evidenced by student learning: (a) Assessment system, (b) Program Review system, and (c) Strategic Planning and Budgeting. In different ways each of these systems monitors the use of student learning evidence to inform programmatic changes, evaluates the efficient use of resources, and examines mission alignment. The three interconnecting systems ensure that decisions are not made in isolation and that the strategic implications for new programs or curricular changes align with mission, improve student learning, and use resources efficiently.

The assessment system is well established and continues to gather momentum as is evidenced by the newly developed Assessment Wheel. The Program Review system, while having been around for some time, has launched a major revision and completed a successful pilot year. Strategic planning has been in place for some time, but with the release of the new strategic priorities in the spring of 2012,

specific action steps, including the institution-wide review of programmatic effectiveness and efficiency, will gain momentum. Assessment of student learning forms the evidentiary basis for programmatic change whether it is an incremental change, elimination of a major program, or the revision of curricula.

Use of Evidence Action (1) – Annual Assessment

The following are specific examples from a number of University units describing some of the ways that PLNU uses the evidence from the assessment of student learning to make program improvements. There are specific examples in each of the Assessment Wheels under the hexagons titled, “Use of the Evidence of Student Learning.” Also, in the Assessment Wheels are recent proposals sent to the curricular committees, [**Academic Policy Committee \(APC\)**](#), and the [**Graduate Studies Committee \(GSC\)**](#) (example [**GSC Curricular Guidelines**](#)). The APC and GSC are central to academic quality control for curricular programs at PLNU. These committees review all proposals for curricular changes, and only after they grant approval for the changes are the proposals submitted to the full-time faculty for a final review and vote.

Department of Biology, Dr. Dawne Page, Chair

We began our analysis of the Biology curriculum by looking at our assessment data and by looking at Biology majors at several comparator institutions. Since 2002 all Biology, Biology-Chemistry, and Environmental Science majors have been assessed for their general knowledge of Biology via the ETS Major Field Test in Biology. Our assessment goal is for each group of students (e.g., Biology-Chemistry or Biology B.S. majors) to be ranked at or above the 75th percentile for each sub-category of Biology. An analysis of these data showed that our scores in the sub-categories of Animal Biology and Plant Biology were declining. Moreover, the Biology-Chemistry majors were particularly weak in these

areas as well as in the area of Ecology. In contrast, all of the majors scored well in the other reported areas.

In addition to these trends, an analysis of other institutions revealed that many require a sequence of at least three courses for their Biology majors: cell structure and function, ecology and evolution, and organismal biology. We were introducing these three topics in just two freshmen courses: BIO210 (Cell Biology and Biochemistry) and BIO215 (Animal Biology). To rectify these shortcomings in our students' education, we split BIO215 into two courses: BIO211 (Ecological and Evolutionary Systems) and BIO212 (Organismal Biology). We rearranged the requirements for each major so that all of the students would take these three foundational courses. These changes went into effect with the 2010-11 catalog.

In summary, we effectively used our assessment data to pinpoint problems within our curriculum, and hopefully, we have corrected those problems. The faculty member who teaches genetics during the fall of the sophomore year has already seen advances in the students' understanding of basic concepts related to BIO211 via informal assessment strategies. However, the ETS test of these students in 2015 will be a better measure of the success of the new curriculum.

Department of Family and Consumer Science, Dr. Kay Wilder, Chair

Throughout the academic year and during the summer, course curriculum and instructional methods are reviewed by the Family and Consumer Science (FCS) Department Chair and faculty. Changes are made to course curriculum and instructional methods are altered for improved effectiveness of instruction and student learning. Assessment methods are yearly evaluated for effectiveness in assessing each FCS program for student learning outcomes, thus analyzing if student learning was achieved at the desired level.

Data, findings and analysis from a variety of collected assessments for the seven programs offered within the FCS Department are housed in the FCS Department Chair's office. The documents entitled (a) *Outcomes Assessment Exam: Ten Year Average Score by Percentage* and (b) *FCS Department Status Reports* are available upon request.

Discussions continue to take place during the FCS department fall workshop, monthly FCS department meetings, as well as meetings between individual FCS faculty members and the Department Chair. Discussions for making improvements in each FCS program are concerned with but not limited to (a) institutional, department, and program student learning outcomes alignment, (b) methods of assessment, (c) course assessment signature assignments, (d) student evaluations of faculty, and (e) findings of the yearly assessments.

Four questions that must be continually in the forefront of the FCS faculty discussions are:

1. How do we know students are learning?
2. To what degree have we been successful in achieving a high level of student learning?
3. What improvements must be made to better serve our students in their learning?
4. Are we focused on the FCS Department's mission and FCS Department's student learning outcomes (DSLO) when reviewing course requirements, course curriculum, and signature assignments?

Department of Art & Design, Dr. Karen Sangren, Chair

When considering information that the Department of Art and Design has learned from assessing student learning faculty consider the following issues:

- Describe any improvements made to the program as a result of assessment.
- Describe how the results of the assessment were disseminated and to whom.
- What is the program's process for reviewing the results?

- What is the process for discussing the implications of the results?
- Based on the findings, what do you plan to do now?
- Discuss program modifications, changes, and timeline for implementation of changes.

Art & Design faculty members are increasingly deliberate about teaching to more specific student learning outcomes (SLOs). Planning for art and design courses has become more focused on student learning rather than goals or objectives. This has increased accountability by faculty members to evaluate how they succeeded or failed to foster student learning during each assignment. Full-time faculty members are fully engaged in this pedagogical shift in higher education and at PLNU. The next phase of data collection will be to assemble course learning outcomes (CLOs) and SLOs from the Art & Design Department's adjunct and part-time faculty members.

More clarity about program and course learning outcomes has also become evident at the departmental level, as Art & Design faculty members have identified three to four learning outcomes for each course. These efforts have examined how the courses help interconnect to develop knowledge over time. The results of this current Assessment Report, now position the department to move into its formal program review over the 2012-2013 academic year.

Discipleship Ministries, Office of Spiritual Development, Melanie Wolf, Director

Some of the critical learning outcomes for Discipleship Ministries focus on the development of leadership skills in the Covenant Group Leaders. As a means of on-going assessment and evaluation, the Discipleship Ministries area collects feedback twice within a given academic year. These surveys are administered to the Covenant Group Leaders mid-year and at the end of each spring semester. In addition to this assessment tool, the Discipleship Ministry area also has each student leader complete a

“Ministry Reflection” short-answer questionnaire that outlines specific details, themes, and overall tone of his or her individual group.

Upon the collection and review of the 2010-2011 data, the Covenant Group leadership team determined that the weekly Student Leader Training Meeting was not an effective model for developing and training students to lead small groups. Primarily a skill-based informational experience, student feedback suggested that training times were too content-driven and did not allow space and time for individual and corporate processing. In addition to this feedback, students also suggested that the informational approach made assumptions about prior knowledge of small-group dynamics, prior knowledge of spiritual formation concepts and theory, and a personal readiness to lead others spiritually.

Reflecting on this feedback, the Covenant Group leadership team revamped the weekly Student Leader Training Meeting for the 2011-12 academic year. The new format still contains pertinent small-group dynamic information; however, it approaches this information from a story-based pedagogy. By doing so, students still engage in important skill-based content, while learning interpersonal techniques of sharing and leading a small group through group discussion. In addition to this change, the weekly Student Leader Training Meeting incorporated spiritual formation concepts, themes, and practices. Students also used a story-based model which focused on key aspects of Christian journey and growth in hopes of teaching spiritual formation material as well as providing a context where individual students can experience private and corporate spiritual growth and maturity.

Office of Strengths and Vocation, Office of Student Development, Jeanne Cochran, Director

With the economic changes affecting the job market, many university centers were caught off guard. Their “one size fits all” programming and job fairs with recruiters lined outside the door offering

employment opportunities for graduates was no longer effective. In 2009 the PLNU Career Center was not well known on campus and was serving only about 10% of PLNU's undergraduate population. The administration made a decision to hire a new director, move the center's location, and launch the Offices of Strengths and Vocation (OSV.) This new department was designed to (a) house external business relations, (b) career services, (c) student employment and internships, and (d) Strengths programming. These four areas worked collaboratively to create a four-year comprehensive program that supports students as they transition from college to career.

OSV became aware of how crucial it was to move from a reactive to a proactive model by creating a year- long comprehensive program of hosting 28 networking venues with as many as 250 professionals on campus to meet students. These events also promoted students' use of career services, which resulted in a 200% increase in the number of students utilizing the services of OSV. The external business relationships were initiated and developed through the efforts of the Executive Director of OSV in collaboration with faculty, staff, parents, and the PLNU External Relations Department. This collaborative effort helps incorporate professionals into the OSV programs and speaking events where students are given opportunities to network and find mentors who will guide them in the career and to potential internships and future employment.

After gaining student and faculty input, and analyzing the office's practice of not seeing students until they were seniors seeking jobs, the Offices of Strengths and Vocation launched a marketing effort to encourage freshmen to connect with its office to begin career research. Therefore, Express Visits were created that required all freshmen to tour OSV as part of their grade in freshman Psychology 101. This initial contact increased their awareness of OSV in both its location and programming available to them for the next four years.

The Offices of Strengths and Vocation for the year of 2010 to present has been able to service over 500 freshmen a year by acquainting them with its available support. Through OSV students have reviewed their assessment results with OCV counselors and have created four-year career plans. Over the past two years, over 1200 students have attended OSV networking events and 70% in a survey reported they found a connection, employment, or an internship through meeting a professional at an OSV event or program. The survey also reflected that 19% of the students who did not make a connection at the OSV events still found these events and programming beneficial in acquainting them with career information through the panel discussions. Through short instructional career videos included with event registration material, we observed improved professional dress and networking skills. The success of the events was measured by increased faculty involvement and support and by increased student attendance, some of which had waiting lists. We also received positive feedback from professionals attending OSV events on the caliber and preparedness of our PLNU students.

Use of Evidence Action (2) – Program Review

The following summaries represent specific examples where assessment used in the Program Review led to specific institutional changes that are currently being implemented. Additional examples are available in the Assessment Wheels where all of the most-current Program Review documents are housed in the “Evidence of Student Learning” hexagon.

Department of Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences, Dr. Maria Zack, Chair

The Mathematical, Information, and Computer Sciences (MICS) Department undertook program review with three main goals: (1) to look at the efficiency of the majors offered by the department (particularly the information systems major); (2) to investigate the development of an interdisciplinary minor in Computational Science because it is one of the fastest growing professions in

the United States, with the San Diego community specifically having a large number of biotechnology companies needing staff skilled in computational science; and (3) to investigate the use of hybrid pedagogy in some of the classes in the department.

The department reviewed all of the majors (Mathematics, Computer Science, and Information Systems) in light of student learning outcomes, national standards, and efficiency. Based on that review three changes were made: (1) The Mathematics major was updated to include a greater focus on mathematical modeling; (2) The Computer Science major was updated to include an increased emphasis on networks, data bases, and security; and (3) The Information Systems major was completely redesigned to become a major in Computer Information Systems. This shift more effectively matches the jobs our Information Systems graduates are obtaining, expands our graduates' knowledge in critical areas, and allows MICS to increase the number of courses that apply to both Computer Science and Computer Information Systems, thus improving departmental efficiency. All curricular changes were implemented by the 2011-12 academic year ([Program Review MOU](#) and annual reports [2011](#) and [2012](#)).

Research indicates that the most effective workers in the field of computational science have a degree in one of the partner disciplines (Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics or Physics) with a minor in Computational Science. This minor was developed based on extensive research into the needs of local businesses and was designed collaboratively among all of the partner disciplines. Students began enrolling in the minor in the fall of 2012 and enrollment data for fall indicates significant student interest.

The University has provided the MICS Department with small amounts of funding for faculty summer stipends for three to four years to support work on hybrid course development. The work commenced in the summer of 2011 and the preliminary ideas were tested in the fall of 2011 and the spring of 2012. The first year yielded a great deal of learning about the technological options for hybrid

mathematics as well as what is and is not effective with our students. This has led to a great deal of revision and some changes in approach. In the summer of 2012 and in the fall of 2012 faculty continue to work on items to prototype, and they will be tested in the spring of 2012.

Department of Psychology, Dr. John Wu, Chair

The Psychology Department's recent program review indicated the need for a senior capstone course. Several learning outcomes were introduced and developed in previous courses, but requiring a senior capstone course allows the opportunity for mastery level learning and assessment throughout all three major concentrations. The capstone offers mastery level elements of the following Departmental Learning Outcomes:

a. Display an increase in self-knowledge as students learn basic tenets of psychology.

b. Demonstrate care for others

c. Describe basic ideas of how psychology and theology can be integrated

To accomplish this goal the Psychology Department modified the existing course PSY 420 Moral Development and Christian Spirituality and renamed it as PSY 420 Pursuing Goodness: The Science of Moral Change, and increased the course from 3 to 4 units. The course has received a significant reorganization and the new name reflects the content changes. It is now designed as the mandatory Psychology senior capstone course across all three concentrations. The updated Course Learning Outcomes of this course are that students will be able to:

- Distinguish three conceptions of moral goodness currently popular in contemporary culture
- Examine the literature on the nature of flourishing and how it relates to Christian ethics

- Summarize three key aspects of the nature of moral character
- Critique the limitations and misconceptions of the “happiness paradigm in psychology especially in light of the Wesleyan theological tradition
- Apply compassion cultivation methods within their own life

Making Psychology 420 a capstone class for all psychology majors will add depth to our course offerings. It will also close the possible loopholes that made it possible for students to complete their major without facing opportunities to demonstrate mastery in all departmental learning objectives. In addition, the course will help fulfill the departmental mission, based on Ephesians 4:29, to develop students who are psychologically knowledgeable, emotionally intelligent, and morally engaged. The addition of the active character cultivation program is necessary for increasing moral engagement rather than just moral knowledge, and it is this addition that warrants the extra unit (Department of Psychology [program review](#) and [MOU](#)).

Department of Kinesiology, Dr. Jeff Sullivan, Chair

The Department of Kinesiology is continuously assessing, evaluating, learning, and improving the programs offered students to maintain the highest standards of excellence and currency in program offerings. In the 2011-2012 program review Kinesiology findings and recommendations included the following major program changes: (1) The various disciplines of Allied Health are rapidly expanding in the United States and California, with job growth expected to be well above the national average (i.e., an average increase of 22% over the next 10 years). We expect a continued increase in first-time freshmen who declare Exercise Science and Athletic Training as their major. In addition, there are those students who migrate from other majors (Biology), so course capacity will need to be adjusted accordingly; (2) Comparator schools are growing in their pre-Allied Healthcare and Athletic Training programs and declining in their Physical Education programs. The Kinesiology Department will propose a

new health and fitness major to the Academic Policies Committee in the 2012-2013 academic year; and

(3) The Exercise Science major does not currently require clinical course credit, potentially creating a competitive disadvantage for PLNU students when applying to graduate schools. The Kinesiology Department is considering a curriculum revision in Exercise Science to add a clinical course requirement and change to a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science.

Use of the Evidence of Student Learning (3) - Institutional Planning and Decision Making

The University makes use of a variety of evidence in its planning and decision-making processes. Over the last several years the institution has been working to systematize the use of data and centralize its collection and storage.

In the 2004-05 academic year, the University overhauled its strategic planning process to include broader input from faculty, staff, students, alumni, board members, and the members of the President's community advisory groups. The committee also was expanded to include all of the President's Cabinet because the Cabinet is responsible for developing the University's annual budget. In 2004-2006 cycle of planning the Strategic Planning Committee (now the [Planning Action Council](#)) introduced the wide use of focus groups and engaged in extensive surveying of students, staff, faculty, and alumni. This information combined with a broad collection of institutional data, and this information went into the formation of the [2006-2009 Strategic Plan](#). That plan was in effect at the time of the last WASC visit.

In the fall of 2008 the Strategic Planning Committee began gathering preliminary data for developing the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan. However, because of the significant upheaval in the global economy and the large scale changes in the higher education, the process was slowed in order to take into account these emerging changes as they unfolded. From fall 2008 to spring 2012 the Strategic

Planning Committee examined a wide variety of data. This included institutional data, some with comparators and benchmarks; [**environmental scanning**](#) information; high level learning outcomes and program review data; and data about national trends. In addition, the Committee conducted focus groups with faculty and staff (combined), students, board members, and community members. The Committee also spent some time using this data to engage in scenario planning. From this collection of information a set of potential strategic priorities were developed, tested, and refined. This refinement process involved many in the University community, and the set of priorities was finalized in the spring of 2011. It is anticipated that the large issues described in the [**four strategic priorities**](#) will be an important part of the University's strategy for the next 10 years.

While the process of developing strategic priorities was underway, the University reviewed the existing faculty committee configuration and consulted national best practices. As the result of this global review, a number of committee structures and committee descriptions were updated. At that time the Strategic Planning Committee was renamed the Planning Action Council, slightly changing its membership and modifying its duties to more accurately reflect the advisory and accountability roles of the Planning Action Council. The Planning Action Council has responsibility for:

- working with the University community to develop the annual implementation steps for the strategic priorities ([**PLNU 2012 strategic priorities action steps**](#));
- receiving the progress reports and outcome data from each individual or group responsible for a specific implementation step ([**strategic priorities implementation**](#)); and
- producing an annual report of the overall progress made in advancing the strategic priorities ([**strategic plan development timeline**](#)).

In the 2011-2012 academic year, the first formal set of implementation steps were developed. These 28 steps were scheduled for implementation over a four-year window. However, by the 2010-

2011 academic year the general form of the strategic priorities was apparent and some actions were begun in advance of the completion of the planning documentation. For example, by 2010-2011 a system for producing 9-10 environmental scanning reports each year was developed, and these scans were disseminated among all faculty and staff. In the spring of 2012 the Planning Action Council produced the first annual report of progress made on implementation steps; this generated a confidential internal institutional report as well as a brief summary of progress intended for external audiences.

An essential part of institutional planning is forming a solid connection between the desired student learning outcomes, institutional plans, and the institutional budget. PLNU works with a three-year budget cycle and considers five- to six-year financial projections. The cost of each implementation step is carefully reviewed before it is undertaken, and the associated costs are included in the appropriate budgetary year. The three-year budget and the implementation steps are reviewed annually.

The University Cabinet is the University Budget Committee. The University's budget is developed in two steps. The first step is to identify the large scale parameters (e.g., expected revenue and expected increases in fixed costs). Once those parameters have been approved by the University's Board of Trustees, the Cabinet develops a detailed budget for the next academic year. A variety of economic and higher education trend data are used in developing the broad parameters. Specific outcome data as well as strategic information is used in developing the detailed budget. For example, the Cabinet carefully examines application and enrollment trends and comparator discount rates for the last several years before estimating tuition revenue. Summaries of Academic Program Review documents, including learning outcomes and best practices, are examined before making a decision

about whether or not to move forward with the addition of a new program or faculty member. PLNU planning and budgeting is data-driven.

To further support the use of data in institutional decision making, the Planning Action Council is undertaking a process of developing a core institutional data set for decision making. Sources for this information include:

- Critical elements of IPEDS data
- National Surveys: HERI, NSSE
- CIC FIT and KIT to give operational benchmarks
- Internal Learning Outcome Data
- Program Reviews (data from both benchmarking and looking at best practices)
- External Graduation Proficiency Data (ETS Proficiency Profile)
- Delaware Data Study – PLNU began participating in the 2011-12 academic year
- Comparisons and benchmarks set for the non-academic units of the University
- [**Survey data from alumni Spring 2012**](#)
- [**Survey panel data**](#). Since 2010-11 we have been selecting undergraduates for a survey panel, in which they will be tracked through their education and 15 years after graduation. This data will help in measuring co-curricular and life-long learning outcomes.

This large undertaking is part of a systematic plan to centralize all critical institutional data. It is happening in parallel with institution-wide conversations about prioritizing expenditures using some of the ideas contained in Dickeson's *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*. The work to construct the core institutional data set began in 2011-12 and will be completed before the end of the 2012-13 academic year.

The rationale for creating a data dashboard is to provide a simple annual data set for the Board of Trustees. The intent is to give the board an overview of the general health and the progress of the institution based on key metrics. The Board has been provided this data for the last five year and the data set has grown over time (sample: [**2011-12 Data Dashboard**](#)). The 2012-13 Board data dashboard will include more information for the Board about student learning outcomes.

Use of Assessment and Data in Decision making – Next Steps

- *Annual Assessment* – Continue to develop curricular, co-curricular, and University Center capacity for assessment with a focus on the use of evidence in programmatic decision making. The strategies for enhancing this capacity are detailed in earlier sections of the report.
- *Program Review* – It is embedded in all PLNU Program Review guidelines that programmatic decisions must be data-driven. This includes assessment data, best practices, guild standards, and comparators/benchmarks where available.

By 2017 the institution will:

- Complete one full cycle of academic program review using the updated guidelines for all academic departments,
- Conduct program review for all co-curricular units using the new Co-Curricular Program Review guidelines, and
- Conduct a program review for at least half of the University Centers.

Centralized Data – By 2012 the University expects to:

- Complete the identification of the essential elements for the core institutional data set for decision making.
- Populate that data set with longitudinal data and relevant comparators and benchmarks.

Budgeting and Prioritization – The university will:

- Engage Institutional leaders in reflection about the institutional data (the core data set), institutional priorities, and the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional programs.
- Make use of this information in building the detailed budget for the 2013-2014 academic year and the larger budget parameters for the 2013-2014 through 2015-2016 academic years.

Strategic Priorities – The Planning Action Council will continue to update the strategic priorities implementation steps and to monitor progress annually.

V. Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution

As described earlier in this report, there are a number of changes in academic leadership both in terms of personnel and structure. The new structure is stable and the only position currently being filled by an interim is the Institutional Effectiveness/Institutional Research Director. However, an active search is underway and a new Director will begin spring 2013.

Through careful management and planning, the University has weathered the economic downturn well. In the period 2008-present the University has exercised financial caution, but there has not been a need for significant budget cuts or reduction in staff. The University's strategic priorities are focused on keeping PLNU effective and relevant in the rapidly changing world of higher education and in creating those strategic initiatives while wisely managing our resources. PLNU's current financial position provides a solid base for that work.

SECTION V. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The assessment culture of PLNU has experienced a real change over the past five years and most dramatically since the adoption of the Assessment Wheels and the revised program review process linking resource planning to program improvement. Transparency in displaying all assessment plans and activities has created a learning environment among faculty around assessment practices. Conversations about assessment, program review, and programmatic benchmarking have led to the creation of infrastructures for continuous improvement. Committees and academic units have found a voice as they have been empowered with decision-making authority based on the evidence of student learning and external benchmarking. That is not to say that we have in any way arrived at where we believe is a final destination. However, we have made intentional and genuine gains toward developing a culture engagement around student learning.

We are committed in the months and years ahead to continue making progress in each of these areas. As we approach the next season of accreditation review we do so with greater understanding of assessment processes and the value of evidence informed decisions. Each time we undergo such rigorous efforts toward self-improvement our students benefit and every step furthers our commitment to fulfilling our institutional mission and focuses our efforts on the integrity, quality, and meaning of the degree.

APPENDICES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Current catalog:
 - Undergraduate <http://catalog.pointloma.edu/>
 - Graduate <http://catalog.pointloma.edu/index.php?catoid=6>
- [Summary Data Form](#)
- [Required Data Exhibits](#) to Support Proposals, Special Visit Reports & Interim Report
- Most recent audited financial statements by an independent certified public accountant or, if a public institution, by the appropriate state agency; management letters, if any.
 - [2010-2011 Financial Audit](#)
 - [2010-2011 Management Letter](#)
 - [2011-2012 Financial Audit](#)
 - [2011-2012 Management Letter](#)
- Organization charts or tables, both administrative and academic, highlighting any major changes since the last visit - may be found at
 - Administrative Structure [2007](#) and [2012](#)
 - Academic Affairs Structure [2007](#) and [2012](#)