Goals and Outcomes: An Exercise Before the Next WRSC Meeting

Below you will find the 9 priorities that WRSC found to be most important to our institutional direction and preparation process for our upcoming reaccreditation. The priorities are meant to give us insight into what our university may be most lacking and what improvements can be made to fill these deficiencies. They are meant to act as a call to action and a foundation in making our ideas and vision for the university manifest.

Now that we have completed a self-review of our institution, it is time to discuss and decide upon our own goals and outcomes that we hope to attain by the end of this process. From these goals and outcomes will spawn our institutional themes. Below you will find the goals and outcomes of three separate universities’ institutional proposals as they were presented to WASC. These goals and outcomes are fairly similar to what we have discussed with regard to our own priorities as a university and should act as a model for what our own goals and outcomes could potentially look like.

Before the next meeting, please review our priorities as well as the goals and outcomes from the three institutional proposals listed below. In reviewing these items, it will become clear that our goals and outcomes can flow naturally from our own priorities. During the meeting, we will discuss our individual findings, the end product being agreed upon goals and outcomes that we will be able to share with the appropriate committees as well as the community at large.

9 Highest Priorities

1.2 (Institutional Purposes) - Educational objectives are clearly recognized throughout the institution and are consistent with stated purposes. The institution had developed indicators and evidence to ascertain the level of achievement of its purposes and educational objectives.

2.10 (Support for Student Learning) - Regardless of mode of program delivery, the institution regularly identifies the characteristics of its students and assesses their needs, experiences and levels of satisfaction. This information is used to help shape a learning-centered environment and to actively promote student success.

3.2 (Faculty and Staff) - The institution demonstrates that it employs a faculty with substantial and continuing commitment to the institution sufficient in number, professional qualifications and diversity to achieve its educational objectives, to establish and oversee academic policies, and to ensure the integrity and continuity of its academic programs wherever and however delivered.

3.5 (Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources) - Fiscal and physical resources are effectively aligned with institutional purposes and educational objectives, and are sufficiently developed to support and maintain the level and kinds of educational programs offered both now and for the foreseeable future.
3.7 (Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources) - The institution’s information technology resources are sufficiently coordinated and supported to fulfill its educational purposes and to provide key academic and administrative functions.

3.8 (Organizational Structures and Decision-Making Processes) - The institution’s organizational structures and decision-making processes are clear, consistent with its purposes, and sufficient to support effective decision-making.

4.4 (Strategic Thinking and Planning) - The institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes at each level of institutional functioning, including new curriculum and program approval process, periodic program review, ongoing evaluation, and data collection. These processes involve assessments of effectiveness, track results over time, and use the results of these assessments to revise and improve structures, and processes, curricula, and pedagogy.

4.5 (Commitment to Learning and Improvement) - Institutional research addresses strategic data needs, is disseminated in a timely manner, and is incorporated in institutional review and decision-making process. Included among the priorities of institutional research function is the identification of indicators and the collection of appropriate data to support the assessment of student learning consistent with the institution’s purposes and educational objectives. Periodic review of institutional research and data collection are conducted to develop more effective indicators of performance and to assure the suitability and usefulness of data.

4.6 (Commitment to Learning and Improvement) - Leadership at all levels is committed to improvement based on the results of the processes of inquiry, evaluation and assessment used throughout the institution. The faculty take responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process and use the results for improvement. Assessments of the campus environment in support of academic and co-curricular objectives are also undertaken and used, and are incorporated into institutional planning.

Goals and Outcomes from BYUH’s Institutional Proposal

1. Incorporate critical data into decision-making processes. This will involve identifying what constitutes critical data, enhancing our ability to capture such data, and determining the best ways to ensure that such data are fundamental to the deliberative process. Since our last re-accreditation visit, we have instituted a new database system. We are now in the process of designing a data warehouse that will provide key performance indicators critical to all levels of academic planning.

2. Implement a departmental review process for each program area. Some of these reviews will be held in conjunction with program accreditation visits. We anticipate that each program will be reviewed on a six-year rotating basis. The process of rigorously reviewing each program will identify both strengths and weaknesses, and will afford
faculty with substantial opportunities to have input into long-term university planning processes.

3. Implement meaningful, positive changes in the teaching-learning process at BYU-Hawai‘i by building on assessment of student learning outcomes. We will ask each department or curricular area to identify desired learning outcomes for each major or program offered on campus and to provide evidence that graduates demonstrate these learning outcomes. Under the direction of the university’s Assessment Committee (chaired by a faculty member), we are in the third year of an assessment program, and will continue to collect information, some of which will be included in the university’s e-portfolios that we hope eventually to make available on the Internet.

4. Develop outcomes and means of assessment for selected General Education areas. Since drafting a new mission statement two years ago, our General Education committee has been in the process of identifying methods for articulating outcomes and devising means of assessment for the major qualities that the mission statement envisions for BYU-Hawai‘i graduates. Since most of these outcomes are not major-specific, the task of developing such outcomes and assessment instruments is very complex. We have begun the task, and expect to develop, test, refine, and apply assessment instruments for two of the seven GE qualities during the re-accreditation period.

5. Educate faculty on the processes and purposes of a culture of evidence. This outcome is clearly tied to the other outcomes outlined in this section, and obligates us to make evidence the basis for our claims about what we do well. Continued faculty input into the re-accreditation process, and more conscious socialization of new faculty into an evidentiary culture, will help make verification the norm. Creating mechanisms and motivation for faculty input is part of this goal.

Goals and Outcomes from GTU’s Institutional Proposal

1. Integrate and sustain processes of planning and decision making that will better support the consortium’s commitment to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue in a global context.

2. Increase the “fitness for purpose” between the academic and vocational preparation of our students and the jobs they obtain after graduation.

3. Achieve a greater degree of alignment between strategic priorities and the deployment of institutional resources (including finances, personnel, etc.).

4. Strengthen the focus on student learning in the institutional processes and procedures of review, assessment, and evaluation.

5. Integrate the principles and processes used in this accreditation review process within the institutional culture of the GTU and its various constituent groups.
Goals and Outcomes from PLNU’s Institutional Proposal

1. Extend our maturing institutional culture of evidence, incorporating critical data into strategic, operational, and academic planning. Since the last WASC re-accreditation review, we have made strides in bringing critical data elements into the planning process. The Strategic Planning Committee has developed a complete set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) to give guidance to our planning process, and the Office of Institutional Research (IR) has developed a series of data reports to assist in academic planning regarding faculty resource allocation, class size analysis, enrollment trends, student retention, and academic success. However, much work is still needed to expand these efforts and develop an institutional culture of evidence. We also need to find more effective ways to disseminate information and to document the changes that may result.

2. Ensure that the new mission statement is embraced, shared, and embodied throughout the institution. The first step in revamping our planning process was to restate our institutional mission. This process took nearly a year. The new mission identifies three primary institutional activities that can be summarized in the phrase—To Teach, To Shape, To Send. During the Fall Faculty Convocation in 2003, members of the faculty spent an entire day together thinking about these core functions. Likewise, Student Development staff addressed these themes in workshop experiences at the beginning of the academic year. There was substantial agreement that these functions expressed the essential nature of the University and that more dialogue would be necessary to be sure that the functions are fully embraced and embodied. We will be using a thematic approach in the Educational Effectiveness Review, and these core functions will serve as the organizing framework for our reflective essays.

3. Formalize the link between mission, vision, strategic planning, and the annual budgeting process. Now that we have a new mission statement and a vision statement to guide a revamped strategic planning process, we need to develop more effective ways to link planning and budgeting. We will make this a point of emphasis as we review Standards and CFR’s in the Preparatory Review.

4. Develop a more specific and reliable set of outcomes measures and means of assessment for general education and the co-curricular. We have made significant progress in the assessment of student learning outcomes, particularly as it relates to academic majors. With regard to general education, however, it has been difficult to develop an assessment strategy because our goals are so general and aspirational that specific, measurable outcomes cannot be identified easily. We now have a General Education Task Force at work and have begun to gather assessment data from graduating seniors. Through this re-accreditation process, general education and co-curricular assessment will receive primary attention as we review CFR’s in the Preparatory Review and reflect on our institutional themes in the Educational Effectiveness Review.

5. Review and improve our quality assurance processes, focusing particularly on academic program review and the improvement of instruction. We have had a five-year cycle of program review for all 17 academic departments for over a decade. It is time to
review and assess this program along with other key quality assurance processes such as our new program approval process, particularly since we function under an undergraduate enrollment cap, and student satisfaction is critical to our success. At the same time, there is keen interest in developing new graduate programs at teaching locations other than the main campus. The Preparatory Review will allow for a focused examination of these important processes.

6. Sustain discourse about what educational effectiveness means for Point Loma Nazarene University and sharpen our assessment of student learning outcomes. The reflective essays addressing institutional themes in the Educational Effectiveness Review will provide the structure for a serious, ongoing discussion about educational effectiveness and attention to student learning outcomes. A careful, prolonged discussion is critical as we work to develop an institution-wide culture of evidence with genuine faculty buy-in.

7. Examine the impact of growth in graduate programs (new programs, new sites) with an eye to quality assurance and faculty governance processes. Since our undergraduate campus must operate within the constraints of an enrollment cap, we look for continued growth in off-campus graduate programs to reduce upward pressure on tuition. A careful review utilizing Standards and CFR’s during the Preparatory Review will permit the University to assess the functionality of our quality assurance processes and ensure that faculty governance is maintained effectively.

8. Evaluate current strategies to enhance diversity and, in the process, renew our commitment to building a diverse and respectful University environment. John Wesley, an 18th Century English clergyman and reformer (to whom we trace our theological tradition) proclaimed in his theology of holy living that the world was his parish. He equated piety with love of God and neighbor, and he connected learning with practical acts of love and service. As an institution in the Wesleyan tradition, PLNU’s goal is to cultivate compassion, cultural sensitivity, and a passion for social outreach in our students. Diversity, an issue highlighted by the last visit team and in our own institutional self-review, will be specifically addressed in the Preparatory Review.