Commencement Committee Feedback

General Comments submitted:

- After much consideration regarding Commencement Committee’s role vis a vis WASC, I have come to the conclusion that the committee does not fit neatly into any of the categories. Instead, Commencement is the celebratory culmination of everything that leads up to graduation. It incorporates all four themes and rewards students for their hard work - and the hard work of every department on campus. The same can be said for the Awards Convocation.
- I read the institutional proposal and have problems answering the questionnaire. I feel that what the Commencement Committee does is the end result of much of what the proposal addresses and there isn’t any direct impact on the Committee. I do feel that the bulleted points are very important and are probably the things we most need to address.

One questionnaire was completed as follows:

1) **Which theme(s) are most applicable to your committee’s work?**
   I believe that all four themes are really important for the improvement of the university. Each theme in different ways is applicable to the commencement committee’s work. But, I would say the most applicable could be instructional effectiveness because this may affect students GPA and the number of students graduating.

2) **Do you feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect the most important needs of Woodbury University? Why?**
   I feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect important needs of the university. This is because each bulleted action is trying to improve the existing system.

3) **Can you think of other actions that should be added?**
   I think the actions listed are really important and they should be addressed first. I am sure in the future other actions will be added to help improve the university.

4) **For your committee, what would the impact be of the actions of the Institutional Proposal?**
   This Institutional Proposal may help students become more successful. The commencement committee may need to grow because the institution will have more students and more students graduating. Also, some of the members of the committee may have to go through more training to better understand the new system of education and the changes the university is going through.
5) Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal?  
I don’t have additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal at this time. I just think that the re-accreditation is a good way to improve the university and as a student I look forward to seeing and experiencing the positive changes.

6) Are there any questions that you have regarding the re-accreditation process?  
At this point I do not have any questions about the re-accreditation process.

Alumni Association Advisory Board Feedback

1) Which theme(s) are most applicable to your committee’s work?

• Institutional identity; Institutional alignment; Successful Student Development

• As a member of the Alumni Board, I feel that some of our main goals are represented via Themes 1 and 3 (Institutional Identity and Successful Student Development). In order to foster a greater sense of pride in WU and the education we’ve received here, as well as ensuring that WU is represented within the community, the Alumni Board gears its own activities, and those we participate in, towards building an alumni network that reaches out into various parts of the local community.

• Institutional identity, Institutional alignment, with student’s integration of educational growth and development of students within Woodbury’s educational environment.

• Instructional Effectiveness – The teaching environment is a major aspect of the alumni learning process. If the education received from the professors is not up to par and worthwhile for the students then their willingness to stay connected to the university decreases.

2) Do you feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect the most important needs of Woodbury University? Why?

• Yes, I believe the bulleted actions reflect the most important needs of the University. The University needs to gain a better understanding of the student population and how to serve the students better. The points under Institutional Identity I believe reflect that theme properly.
• The points under Instructional Effectiveness are appropriate since they reflect the fact that to keep students in the university classes need to be geared toward the actual student needs. They also reflect the fact that having strong teaching skills is important and that teachers need to be monitored to make sure they are serving the students in a positive manner. The points also point out that a comprehensive program will help students understand better what they are learning and how the learning will benefit them in the future.

• The points under Successful Student Development are good since they talk about developing students as people, not just students. The points also take into consideration that even after graduation, the students should be involved continually with the university through alumni activities. Students affiliated with Woodbury should be the advocates of the university and this area addresses that to some extent.

• The points under Institutional Alignment need more work. There is not much substance in this area based on the document.

• For themes, 1 through 3, I can positively say “yes”. However, for Theme 4, I’m not quite sure which processes are being referred to, so it’s difficult to say if it is addressing an important WU need.

• Yes... It is very important that bulleted actions meet the needs of the university and students. Woodbury should meet the needs of the students and as the Institutional Identity should reflect this theme also. It is extremely important to bridge the day and weekend students. All students who attend the university are all students not just one area of education.

• The points under Successful Student Development, is strong as the university strives to develop students as people. Woodbury strives that graduates should stay involved with its community through alumni activities and be advocates of their university. The Alumni is addressing these issues.

• Instructional Effectiveness - Yes, strong emphases should be placed upon action #4. Students should not be read to in class (when going to class its not very educational when the professor reads from the book to you, we can do this on our own).

Successful Student Development – educating the students from the beginning about their participation and role once graduating should be a.

Institutional Alignment – not much can be said without seeing the strategic plan.

3) Can you think of other actions that should be added?

• Other than expanding on area 4, some more focus on developing students to become alumni. Alumni tracking makes sense and should be done, however if the university cannot appeal to its students to be active alumni, then the tracking is pointless since people will not be involved. There is a disconnect between the university and its alumni and while this is being worked on positively, it needs to be listed as a priority for alumni/student success.
• Not at the moment.

• The work of the alumni is extremely important for students to stay active and these needs to be address with students in Orientation. This way students will realize that is not just a graduation but lifetime journey with its students. This must be listed as a priority.

• No.

4) For your committee, what would the impact be of the actions of the Institutional Proposal?

• For the Alumni Association, the action will help to narrow the gap between students and past alumni. Past alumni will gain more of an identity to the university as the university understands it culture, mission and purpose. Woodbury alums are success stories and by involving them in the institution and its growth they will feel more of a connection to the university and will be its advocates in the public. Concentrating on students and their needs will also help students remain positive about their university experience and they be alumni advocates helping to find other young people to enter the university. Students and alumni working together can benefit the university and grow the student body.

• It’s difficult to say without first discussing with the alumni board members.

• Alumni Association to help narrow the gap with students and past alumni- This will bring many success stories and by involving them in the Woodbury community the past alumni feels connected and advocates about their educational journey. This brings more students to be enrolled at Woodbury and together the alumni and students will benefit the growth of the university.

• For the alumni association all the themes play a major role. But I think the one that will help keep the alumni connected to the university would be number 4 without allocated funds the association is not able to provide the events and networking functions that will spark the interest of the alumni. Customer services also plays a major role.

5) Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal?

• Not at this time.

• No, it seems that all the bases are covered.

6) Are there any questions that you have regarding the reaccreditation process?
• Not at this time.

• No, it seems that all the bases are covered.

**Gala Committee Feedback**

1) **Which theme(s) are most applicable to your committee’s work?**
   As a member of the Gala committee I shall address the proposal from that vantage point. I think number 3 is most applicable. In my opinion many of the systems already in place contribute to successful Student Development.

2) **Do you feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect the most important needs of Woodbury University? Why?**
   Yes, I do feel that the actions proposed will help the needs of Woodbury University and thus, enrich and enhance the experience for each Student.

3) **Can you think of other actions that should be added?**
   My knowledge of how other departments interact with the fashion dept is very limited however all the disciplines taught are related in the world of commerce which makes me think that if they are not at Woodbury, they should be.

4) **For your committee, what would the impact be of the actions of the Institutional Proposal?**
   It will strengthen and give our commitment greater importance and value.

5) **Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal?**
   I find the commitment and positive attitude of the teaching staff and administration admirable. Thus in my opinion the Institutional Proposal is strong and viable.

6) **Are there any questions that you have regarding the reaccreditation process?**
   I don’t have any questions at this time but certainly would like to know more as the entire process goes forward.

**Other Comments:**
I carefully read the document and I am not sure that I am the correct person to evaluate it. I do not know what goes on in the planning and running of the university. I teach my classes and work with my students, and that is about all. I do not know what criteria WASC uses in evaluating a school for reaccreditation. However, I did notice some things which caught my attention. In the last paragraph in section #1 it says a special visit. I know that this is for WASC, but I think that it should state a special visit by WASC. In #2 it says that WU transforms itself more fully into. Into what? On page 16 the second column says Adopted by the department chairs. I think that it should be read adopted.

From a development standpoint, I feel that the analysis and tracking of alumni should be an item of the highest priority. Twenty-five years ago I used to send contact information to the development office of any applicants that came to my employment agency who listed WU on their resume. Either it was lost or filed in the circular file because there does not seem to be any record of these people.
One of the people I sent was a senior partner of one of the Big 8 CPA firms. Who knows where he is now and how much he could have given to WU. As is stated in the document, this will strengthen both the endowment for strategic planning and help the university maintain a strong short-term financial environment. The Gala is just a start. Sooner or later it will peak out at 150,000 or 250,000 dollars per year. Other events of the same type should be developed over the coming years, not only to raise more money, but take the pressure off of the school to keep asking the same people for money year after year.

**Faculty Development Committee Feedback**

1) **Which theme(s) are most applicable to your committee’s work?**

   We feel that the work of our committee most impacts Themes 1 and 2, although the institutional resources made available to our committee as part of Theme 4 will have a major effect on the success of our work.

   **Theme 1:** The encouragement of faculty research, scholarship, and publication through the Faculty Development Awards is a key part of the University’s shift in identity to an institution that values scholarly activity and has made it part of the requirement for faculty rank advancement.

   **Theme 2:** Some Faculty Development Awards are directly related to teaching effectiveness, others focus on individual scholarship and creative work. All of them pay off in better performance in the classroom.

2) **Do you feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect the most important needs of Woodbury University? Why?**

   We are broadly in support of the action items since two of us participated in development of the Themes and actions.

3) **Can you think of other actions that should be added?**

   No.

4) **For your committee, what would the impact be of the actions of the Institutional Proposal?**

   We hope that the recognition of the value of faculty development implicit in Woodbury’s Institutional Proposal will result in more funds being made available for Faculty Development Awards.

5) **Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal?**

   The Faculty Development Committee makes awards to support faculty research and creative work. Awards totaled $13,000 in 2003. The Awards Committee has
already introduced assessment of outcomes into the awards process in three ways:

- The Committee has implemented a rigorous awards procedure with a set of written guidelines approved by the Senate.

- Awards proposals must include detailed description of outcomes, proposed research methodology, and benefits to the faculty member and the University. The proposals are peer reviewed as part of the selection process.

- Awards recipients are required to present their research or creative work to the University community at an Awards Colloquium in the spring semester.

6) Are there any questions that you have regarding the reaccreditation process?

No.

**Space Planning Committee Feedback**

1) Which theme(s) are most applicable to your committee’s work?

Ranked in order of importance the committee indicated 4 as most important to committee followed by 1, 2 and 3.

The work that the committee is doing relies heavily on buy-in from the Board of Trustees and the administration. Because many of the projects have large funding requirements the theme relating to institutional alignment communicates the importance of the committees goals with realization of these goals. The ultimate concern of the committee regarding theme #4 is whether or not we as a committee are empowered to do the work we have been asked to do.

There was discussion about the institutional identity taking into account not just the social and academic identity of its constituents but also its physical identity. It was also expressed that the physical identity and space planning issues can help reaffirm any developed institutional identity. One example was the goal of the school of Architecture and Design valuing sustainable design. There is more that can be done in the physical identity that reinforces this value.

The other important aspect of the institutional identity deals with the historical narrative. The discussion of historical narrative revolved around
the large picture but also the history of the institutions procedure for implementing change at a managerial level.

Discussion around theme 2’s importance to the committee reflected the importance the committee places on successful instructional effectiveness and its reliance on adequate space needs and standards as well as adequate technological infrastructure in the spaces.

In regards to Theme three, there are many spatial requirements that could help create successful student development. Spaces such as lecture halls, student unions, and gallery space would enhance the co-curricular activities necessary to develop successful student development.

2) **Do you feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect the needs of Woodbury University? Why?**

There was consensus that the action items reflected fairly well the needs of the University. One action item that did raise questions was Theme 1 action item #2, in discussion of the narrative history of the university, there was a concern that it focused more on the past as opposed to a future narrative. While the theme itself would result in a mission statement for the university the committee felt that action item #2 should include the opportunity to express visions for the future that would inform the mission statement, specifically those aspects of the narrative that dealt with physical identity and issues of environmental concerns.

3) **Can you think of other actions that should be added?**

The committee felt that under Theme #3 Successful Student Development there should be an action item similar to action item 2 but one that focuses specifically on the assessment of successful student development as it relates to facilities on campus. If we as a university are concerned with the development of a successful student outside of the classroom, there needs to be an assessment of facility impact on co-curricular activities. This also raised the question of how co-curricular act ivies and their corresponding facilities respond to the needs of students development in a commuter based institution.

4) **For your committee, what would the impact be of the actions of the Institutional Proposal?**

Successful assessment and implementation of Theme #4, Institutional alignment would assure the committee members that the work they have been engaged in will help create change in the institution and not feel as if they are engaged in futile activities.
Many of the themes would provide a renewed sense of purpose to the committee’s activities. Assessment of student success and effective teaching as it pertained to the planning and physical characteristics of the university would be an additional review goal for the committee.

It could also help in establishing a system for prioritizing many of the projects brought forth to the committee. Prioritizing could be tied to assessment.

5) **Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal?**

The action items in theme #4 needs further rationalization as found in the other action items. Without the rationale, it appears as if these action items are less clear than the others. Also on the last two action items of theme #4 they should end “...in order to...”. This would also help clarify and focus the intent of the action items.

Overall comment from the committee dealt with the idea of assessment and accountability. Is there a way of determining which constituencies of the university would be accountable for the different themes and action items? Specific areas of accountability had to do with administrative and Board accountability. The other major concern of assessment and accountability has to do with the gray areas of shared responsibility.

In addition to clarifying responsibility the committee thought it would be good to have a section for each theme that discusses assumptions.

6) **Are there any questions that you have regarding the reaccreditation process?**

Two questions arose about the accreditation process:

Who will assess whom?

How will assessment results leading to change be implemented?

**Curriculum Committee**

1) **Which theme(s) are most applicable to your committee’s work?**

From the perspective of the Curriculum Committee, the theme that seems most applicable is # 2 – Instructional Effectiveness.
2) Do you feel that the bulleted actions under each theme in the Proposal reflect the needs of Woodbury University? Why?

Yes, with the following comments:

- Action #1: Whose formal task will it be to explore optimal modes of instruction? Delegation to an “assessment” committee?
- Action #2: Whose task will it be to perform a comprehensive program review? Chairs?
- Action #3: Whose task will be to establish standardized parameters of assessment?
- Action #4: Who will be responsible for the oversight of faculty portfolios?

3) Can you think of other actions that should be added?

- Looking into the possibility of establishing a university “Assessment” committee comprised of multiple constituencies to deal with the standardization of parameters to deal with these assessment issues.
- Looking into renewing the charge of the Curriculum Committee to focus more on teaching effectiveness in light of learning environments and student learning outcomes and implementing any charges proposed by a university assessment committee.

4) For your committee, what would the impact be of the actions of the Institutional Proposal?

- Possible reorganization and a more current mandate dealing with teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes.

5) Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal?

- Are there any implicit assumptions within the proposal itself that need to be made explicit?
- How will the issue of accountability (who will be responsible for what) be handled?

6) Are there any questions that you have regarding the re-accreditation process?
• Are there any implicit assumptions within the process itself that need to be made explicit?
• How will the issue of accountability be handled, especially with regards to the Board or the Cabinet?

**Student Affairs**

A portion of the Student Affairs staff retreat on August 22, 2005 was organized around understanding the WASC process and the contribution of Student Affairs in this endeavor. In preparation for the staff to provide feedback about the Institutional Proposal (draft), the following steps were taken:

1. Review/discussion of professional literature highlighting best practices in student development and student affairs work, including “Involvement Theory”
2. Break-out sessions on mission/goals/learning outcomes of each unit of Student Affairs
3. Discussion of themes and actions in proposal
4. Discussion/feedback on questions (A Call for Action)

**Summary of responses:**
All themes are relevant and important. Most directly applicable to Student Affairs work are #1 (Educational Identity), #3 (Successful Student Development) and #4 (Institutional Alignment). Although we recognize #2 (Instructional Effectiveness) is primarily in the domain of course instruction, we have included input. The following feedback/recommendations are examples of additional actions of the themes that may or may not be too specific at this point in submitting the proposal, and are offered to the WRSC for consideration:

• **Identity (#1):**
  
  o The university will undertake necessary steps to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in effectively serving a diverse community of students, with emphasis on what it means to be a Hispanic Serving Institution (if it is determined that we continue as an HSI).

  o The university will determine the various student populations it serves to effectively meet their needs; e.g. traditional/non-traditional (e.g. adult), residential/commuter, etc. (relates also to #4 extended services night/weekends, expansion of residence halls, etc.)

  o The university will develop campus traditions to instill a deeper identification with WU, with respect to characteristics of student population.
• **Instructional Effectiveness (#2):**
  
o The mechanisms for collaboration between curricular learning and co-curricular learning will be developed, established and fully integrated to support holistic education (based on definition of “whole student success” that will be determined).

  o University will explore concept of Personal, Professional Development Modules (PPD) as presented to WRSC by Satindar Dhiman (see handout “Innovations in Business Education: Optimizing Learning through Meaning and Values”). This innovative approach, which can build on the First Year Experience (also to be further developed), begins to integrate “holistic” education into the curriculum by incorporating one-unit modules spanning the entire undergraduate period (also of course related to Successful Student Development).

  o In action 4, mechanisms such as student evaluations and focus groups will be included for assessing teaching effectiveness and standards for competence.

  o Faculty development and in-services will include Learning Theory, e.g. congruence of learning and teaching styles.

• **Successful Student Development (#3):**

  o The university will support and embrace a wellness model as both a vehicle and indicator for successful student development and educating the “whole student.”

  o The university will explore adding a range of “personal development/life skills” courses as electives.

  o The university will educate and include “parents” as partners in developing student success (understanding concept of “helicopter” parents, parents of first generation college students, etc.).

  o The university will improve the living/learning environment, e.g. bringing residence hall standards and program space to meet basic expectations of student body (also relates to #4).

  o The university will develop and institute e-portfolios for students with academic and co-curricular outcome measures.
• **Institutional Alignment (#4)**
  
  o The expectations and role of Student Affairs as partners in the educational process will be clearly articulated and embraced by the institution.
  
  o Innovative theories/models of student development and learning will be acknowledged and integrated across the university. Examples include Transformational education (which places a student’s reflective process at the core of the learning experience), the Personal, Professional Development models presented by Dr. Dhiman, and research on the brain for educators (emphasizing emotions as key in the learning process).
  
  o Student Affairs will determine and specify its intended student outcomes and should commit resources to measuring, assessing and documenting students’ achievement.
  
  o The university will reflect its core value of being “student centered” by clearly defining ways which student input is authentically and genuinely incorporated in decision-making practices.

**Additional Comments/Questions:**

• At a university such as Woodbury, the following issues impact the way a Student Affairs Division can operate:
  a. Primarily a commuter student population
  b. Characteristics of student body (e.g. family, financial pressures)
  c. Labor intensive studio majors
  d. Space and staff limitations
  e. Campus’ expectations of Student Affairs vs. students’ expectations
     (e.g. educators for student development and learning vs. helping students handling day to day problems of living at college)

• How can the Division of Student Affairs best serve the institution and students in support of the themes and actions identified in the proposal?

• Does the institution have a “retention” model that is in practice and is this being addressed in the reaccreditation process?
Student Feedback

Theme 1: Educational Identity

This theme is a good thing! We believe that defining Woodbury University's identity is important, however, that identity/mission/vision needs to be better communicated to the students. Clearer channels of communication with students need to be put into place. We want to know what decisions are being made, and why they are being made. Why was money spent on Kirby Hall? Why can we not put in a crosswalk? We also want to be included more in decision-making processes. We are also concerned that the University is expanding and the current students are suffering as a result (i.e. no res. hall space, overfilled classes). We hear that the University wants to expand even more. How will that affect us and future students? We also feel that the current mission statement is too vague and broad. We want something that we feel like we can put into practice. We also are concerned that the big majors get all the resources and attention, while the small majors get ignored.

Theme 2: Instructional Effectiveness

We agree that a systematic assessment of instruction needs to be in place, but how is that information used? We do not feel that our input is heard. And what specifically will the assessment instrument measure? We agree that standardized program review is crucial so different majors will have equal experiences. We also believe that surveys are not enough… portfolio reviews and classroom critiques should be conducted regularly by a team of faculty and students.

Theme 3: Student Success

We support this objective. We think student success should be viewed from a holistic perspective (like the wellness model).

Theme 4: Institutional Alignment

Nothing to add (we don't really understand this one).
1) Which theme(s) do you feel applies most directly to your work, specifically work produced by your respective committee(s)?

- Theme 1 – technology could be part of the identity but most likely will not be part of the focus
- Theme 2 – technology is very important and is being used more and more in the classroom and as part of assignments
- Theme 3 – technology is very important – PLATO, IQ Web, online transcripts, pre-reqs
- Theme 4 – more of a recipient

2) Based upon these themes, do you feel that the actions under each theme are representative of the needs of Woodbury University? (Please site specific actions)

- Yes but resequence theme 1 actions: 2 then 1 then 3
- Resequence theme 2 actions: 2 then 1 then 3 then 4
(These are more logical sequences.)
- Also add “online delivery” to theme 2 action 1
- And theme 2 action 3, change “standardized parameters” to “common yardstick”
- And theme 4 action 2 add “assess the relevance of the capacity/maturity model for improving institutional alignment.”

3) Can you think of other actions that would be equally or more representative of the work that you do at the University?

- Theme 4 - Something related to getting qualified adjuncts by paying a competitive wage
- Theme 3 – instilling in students a sense of belonging from day 1 so they will feel they want to keep in touch with Woodbury upon graduation, and in touch could be with faculty

4) Based upon the themes and actions of the institutional proposal, what would you expect to change in the work done by your committee?

- The approach to technology use on campus is already based on supporting student and faculty needs. As the needs change, the underlying technology may change. Theme 4 will mean that technology funding must be aligned with institutional need.
5) Do you have any additional comments concerning the Institutional Proposal? Are there any questions that you have regarding the reaccreditation process?

- Proposal - No.

- Process – Yes (questions were answered). The sequence of theme/action development, implementation, then evaluation of implementation should be done in a staggered, iterative approach instead of doing everything all at once. In other words, work will be underway in all three phases at all times rather than phase one then 2 then 3 …