

REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM

SPECIAL VISIT

TO THE

WESTERN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Ralph W. Kuncl, President, University of Redlands; chair
Richard C. Giardina, Trustee, California Institute of Integral Studies
and Notre Dame de Namur University; assistant chair
Hilary A. Baxter, Executive Director, University of California Academic Senate
Lisa E. Bortman, Assistant Provost and Accreditation Liaison Officer
Pepperdine University
William Plater, Senior Adviser, WASC Senior Commission; visit liaison

The team evaluated the institution under the 2008 WASC Senior College and University Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the WASC Senior College and University Commission [WSCUC].

The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website.

Introduction

The Western University of Health Sciences [WesternU] is a private, non-profit, graduate-only institution with campuses in Pomona, California, and Lebanon, Oregon. It was founded in 1977 as the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific. Presently, as the Western University of Health Sciences, it is an institution of nine colleges offering professionally-accredited degree programs in dental medicine, nursing, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physician assistant studies, physical therapy, podiatric medicine, and veterinary medicine, and an additional set of health sciences degrees in biomedical sciences, health sciences, medical sciences, and pharmaceutical sciences.

According to the University's Special Visit Report, "WesternU graduates are trained to become competent, compassionate, and humane professionals." Fairly atypically for a graduate-only institution, it has articulated a set of eight cross-program institutional learning outcomes [ILOs] in interpersonal communication, evidence-based practice, critical thinking, collaboration, clinical competence, ethical and moral decision-making, life-long learning, and humanism. In order to assist students in attaining these outcomes, the University has integrated the ILOs with program learning outcomes [PLOs] and has developed a mandatory Inter-Professional Education curriculum for all health profession students.

WesternU was first accredited by the Senior Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WSCUC] in 1996 and again in 2001 and 2010. The Commission

requested that there be a Special Visit to the institution in spring of 2013 and, subsequently, a further Special Visit in fall of 2014.

For the 2014 visit, the institution was asked to focus on the two very specific issues of faculty governance and quality assurance, as well as complete the Compliance Checklist. Specifically, the University was asked to demonstrate that it has:

- an efficient senate and committee structure
- clear systems for peer review
- faculty ownership of institutional learning outcomes and their assessment
- a clear faculty role in setting curricular and academic standards
- faculty participation in new program development
- faculty participation in planning
- a structured program review process with better alignment of program review findings with planning and budgeting
- improvements in the assessment plan for institutional learning outcomes
- more aggressive calendaring of assessments in co-curricular units
- greater clarity in tracking assessment results and best practices across the University

The team found the Special Visit Report and supplementary documentation – including the institution’s comprehensive compliance audit – to be very responsive to the above issues, except for the fact that lack of hyper-linking made it somewhat difficult to correlate report statements with supporting evidence. The Compliance Checklist was complete with the exception of details about the policy and procedures

for the review of the CEO. Many documents are under development and revision, and the Checklist will need to be reviewed as part of the next comprehensive review.

Similarly, many of the institution's endeavors in response to Commission concerns are in process and not completed. Therefore, a goodly amount of the team's work during the visit itself was geared toward ascertaining both how much has actually been accomplished and how successful the institution is likely to be in completing what it has set out to do.

The team found the faculty to be loyal to the institution's founding values of caring and passionate humanism based on science and their professions. They are attentive to the curriculum, to curricular innovation, and to student learning, as was evidenced visually by the quality of the posters at their poster session for the team. Many of the faculty are deeply engaged now in the sharing of governance of the University through their Academic Senate. It appears clear that the Senate and many of the experienced administrative leaders of the University are well prepared to preserve the legacy so well established by the founding President.

As the team began to structure its visit, it determined that it would do so around the issues identified above, grouping them into four key areas:

- Senate and committee structure and system of peer review
- Curricular and academic standards and new program development
- Assessment of student learning and academic and co-curricular program review
- Strategic planning and budgeting

It is to these four areas – and to the Compliance Checklist – that the team report will now turn, before concluding with a set of commendations and recommendations:

Senate and Committee Structure and System of Peer Review

[CFRs 1.3, 3.8, 3.11, and 4.6 of the 2008 Handbook]

Faculty governance has been an ongoing topic of Commission deliberations and action letters as well as an ongoing concern of visiting teams. Despite promising developments, the report from the March 2013 Special Visit indicated there was “limited progress ... in development of a more robust faculty governance system.” The most recent action letter, accordingly, set an expectation for tangible progress in implementing faculty leadership at the University level that includes an efficient Senate and committee structure as well as clear systems of peer review.

With respect to the former, WesternU highlighted changes designed to improve efficiency of the Senate and enhance the timeliness of its activities. An extensive reworking of the Faculty Handbook, including key revisions to the Assembly voting procedures and quorum requirements, have empowered the Academic Senate to act, develop and implement policy, and conduct business on behalf of the Assembly.

In addition, the institutional report cited the creation of three new standing committees of the Senate, reflecting the expanded scope of work in overseeing academic endeavors:

- University Faculty Affairs Committee: Defines roles and responsibilities, rights, and privileges of, as well as benefits that accrue to, members of the University

faculty. Revises handbook as needed. Proposes, develops, and reviews policies that affect faculty, including promotion and tenure; when solicited, makes recommendations on promotion and tenure (P&T) matters. Participates in new and expanded program review processes, institutes faculty awards, and works to promote faculty development opportunities.

- Academic Standards and Policy Committee: Reviews and defines quality of curricula and academic programs. Reviews academic policies and recommends changes to establish standards across colleges. Discusses academic issues brought to its attention by faculty members or those arising during Assembly meetings.
- Academic Support Services and Planning Committee: Conducts periodic review of existing policies related to and provides guidance on information technology, library, research, human resources, facilities, student affairs, co-curricular program, and support services. Assists with co-curricular program reviews. Participates in institutional strategic planning and planning processes for support services units.

With respect to peer review, WesternU noted that this function occurs through the P&T process administered at the individual college level. A University-wide Promotion and Tenure Task Force has been established to foster consistency in college practices and to ensure conformity with the University's educational mission. Specifically, it is charged with reviewing existing P&T policies and procedures in place in the colleges, including both pre- and post-tenure review processes, to: (1) determine a consensus

regarding minimum requirements specific to tenure and non-tenure tracks, with or without clinical practice; (2) develop universal standards for these minimum requirements; and (3) advance recommendations for college-level P&T committees for consideration by the Faculty Affairs Committee and for potential adoption by the full Academic Senate. Task Force membership includes representation from all nine colleges as well as a representative from the Faculty Affairs Committee. Report submission, review of recommendations, and Senate approval are to occur this academic year, with July 1, 2015 as the implementation target date.

The Special Visit team had a number of opportunities to speak with Academic Senate members and other members of the faculty in regard to all of the above. These included dedicated sessions – with Senate officers; with each of the three standing committees; with the Promotion and Tenure Task Force; and with various faculty in an open faculty meeting – as well as sessions with key academic administrators. Relevant evidence reviewed included the Faculty Handbook, meeting minutes for the three Senate Committees, a Senate organization chart, and a charge to the Promotion and Tenure Task Force.

The University has engaged thoughtfully in creating a more effective Academic Senate to share in governance. Committee structures were overhauled, eliminating obsolete committees that were not meeting and establishing new standing committees. Changes were made to enable the Senate to act on behalf of the faculty as a whole (Academic Assembly) – a development that supports efficient, timely functioning.

This said, the retooling of the Senate is relatively new. The standing committees have been operating for a year and are continuing to flesh out in practice the roles that each was assigned up front. At the time of the visit, for example, they had not yet reviewed their first new academic program proposal. Each committee has responsibility to address different aspects of such proposals (e.g., Faculty Affairs examines faculty resources and student/faculty ratios, etc.).

Moving forward, the exercise of attending to elements of new program proposals, program review, policy review, and the spectrum of other work assigned to each committee will help clarify respective roles. This clarification should enhance the effectiveness of the new Academic Senate committees and their relationship to existing committees of the Assembly (e.g., Assessment and Program Review Committee). It will be important to ensure a clearly defined, manageable set of responsibilities for each that avoids duplication and strengthens the faculty governance role. Furthermore, although there was mention of annual budget development meetings with members of the administration, it was noted that this particular area germane to faculty governance interests is not currently formalized among committee responsibilities. Institutional representatives expressed openness to refining the committee structures now in place. As mentioned during the visit, one idea already under consideration is the possibility of increasing Senate membership to enable all nine colleges to be represented on each of the standing committees.

Aside from formal committee structures, there are efforts to encourage both broader and deeper engagement of faculty in governance. The Academic Senate created

mechanisms for members of the Assembly – more than 300 tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty – to vote electronically on items requiring approval and to submit comments electronically on any matter of interest. It also held three town hall meetings for the membership at large during 2013-14, and plans are in place to continue this practice. These sessions provide an opportunity to communicate with membership broadly, building on two “Faculty and Shared Governance” retreats held in January and April 2014. Furthermore, efforts to cultivate faculty leadership are also underway as well. The Provost has provided resources for two Senate leaders to attend an annual summer institute sponsored by the American Association of University Professors for each of four years (2013 – 2017). To provide continuity and to foster greater expertise, terms of service for Academic Senate members were lengthened from two to three years. Of note also is the addition of a representative to the Senate from the University’s branch campus in Oregon. Finally, the institution is supporting expansion of faculty development opportunities generally, including the Provost’s recent allocation of funds for a faculty mentoring program to augment existing programs in some of the colleges.

Faculty throughout the visit noted their belief that cumulative efforts with respect to governance have resulted in real change, and there is evidence to support that conclusion. The faculty have begun to exercise their role in creation and adoption of some institution-wide policies. For example, the Senate crafted and approved policies on the assignment of credit hours and on course syllabi. There is now a standardized course syllabus template which links to institutional learning outcomes. Such faculty-

driven activities have been complemented by the administration's inclusion of faculty representatives on a number of important undertakings: strategic planning working groups, a campus operations council, a Title IX task force, IT program review, and WSCUC accreditation self-studies. This collaboration reflects institutional acknowledgment of the importance of the faculty's role in governance matters. The value now placed on this role University-wide also underscores a new practice of providing parallel release time for service on Academic Senate committees as has been provided for service on individual college committees. The institution has strategies (listed in the Special Visit Report) to ensure the progress that has occurred up until now can be sustained and, in fact, move ahead to further enhance faculty governance.

As noted above in regard to peer review, promotion and tenure practices are well established in the colleges. Tenure- and non-tenure-track faculty undergo annual evaluation; those who are on the tenure track also are subject to periodic P&T reviews which typically occur at five-year intervals. Institution-wide focus on this aspect of peer review is still in the nascent stages. The Promotion and Tenure Task Force was just established in late August of 2014 and had met only once by the time of the visit. The Task Force report is due in March, 2015, with the aim of review and implementation of recommendations before the next academic year. There is precedent at WesternU for some consultation across colleges about P&T practices. New colleges brought on more recently have worked with established health science colleges to inform their work in this area.

Given everything that has been said above, it is important that, over the next two years, WesternU evaluate the new Senate structure – how well it functions, whether each committee has a manageable set of clearly defined responsibilities that complement but do not duplicate those of other committees, and to what extent their collective operation advances effective faculty governance. Additionally, the University should continue efforts to enhance institutional systems of peer review, including development of standards that ensure University-wide consistency in regard to established practices within the individual colleges.

Curricular and Academic Standards and New Program Development

[CFRs 3.11 and 4.4 of the 2008 Handbook]

In its action letter, the Commission expressed an expectation that there would be “tangible progress” in the implementation of a governance model that would demonstrate a major faculty role at the University level in setting curriculum and academic standards, in developing new programs, and in establishing and maintaining academic policies. In response, the Special Visit Report noted the fall 2013 formation of a standing committee of the Academic Senate charged with reviewing “curricula from across colleges and disciplines to ensure uniform high quality and consistency.” Additionally, this Academic Standards and Policy Committee is responsible for reviewing academic policies and recommending policy changes to establish standards across colleges as needed. The committee is also expected to review annual reports from all of the college curriculum committees and to make recommendations as

appropriate, with the ultimate goal being to “achieve a reasonable level of standardization across colleges.”

In response to the concern raised about faculty oversight in the development of new programs, the Academic Senate developed and approved a “New or Expanded Program Development Policy.” This policy grants the Senate “a significant role/purview in the approval process at both the ‘concept’ and ‘feasibility study’ stages of program development.” Draft implementation procedures were developed in time for the team visit.

The team held a number of discussions regarding the faculty role in new program development, most especially with the Provost and his staff, the Deans Council, and the standing committees of the Academic Senate. The team also reviewed the charges of the three committees, the draft policy and procedures on new and expanded academic programs, the draft concept submission guidelines for new and expanded programs, and the draft program feasibility study guidelines.

The team found good evidence of plans for active faculty participation in program development and in the review of developing programs. In fact, since no University-wide curriculum committee has been established, the new protocols call for all three committees and the entire Senate to be engaged in the review process, with no one committee charged to take a lead role. Though the goal appears to be that of leaving no group out of the review process, the result may inadvertently be to dilute the effectiveness of the process by making it overly cumbersome.

In regard to curriculum development and revision of existing curricula, this is seemingly left to the purview of the nine colleges and their respective curriculum committees, as existing college curricula do not appear to be the purview of the University-wide Senate. Nor does it appear that the Academic Standards and Policy Committee reviews the work of the college committees, as it was charged to do. That Committee's approach to reviewing and defining quality of curricula and academic programs across colleges is through:

- Credit unit standardization
- Syllabus standardization
- Review of program assessment reports
- Review of program review self-studies, accreditation and other external review reports, and program action plans
- Review of the alignment of PLOs and ILOs, and
- Review of the integration of the Inter-Professional Education program into the requirements of all of the health profession degree programs

In regard to establishing academic policies and standards, it is perhaps the case that the title of Academic Standards and Policy Committee is a misnomer, since committee members indicated that, except for the above, the setting of academic standards and the establishment of academic policies for student progress through the curriculum are the purview of the individual colleges through their respective curriculum committees. It would seem that, at the very least, the Academic Standards and Policy Committee

might review the work of the nine college curriculum committees on an annual basis. Additional recommendations regarding enhancing faculty-led, University-level oversight in the academic policy and curriculum arenas are to be found at the conclusion of this report.

**Assessment of Student Learning and Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review
[CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4 of the 2008 Handbook]**

In its action letter, the Commission urged WesternU to produce strong evidence of progress in assessing student learning and reviewing academic and co-curricular programs “by the time of the next WASC interaction, thus demonstrating that quality assurance processes are producing data, reflection, action plans, and budgetary support for identified improvements that contribute to the university mission.” It also called for a model for faculty leadership that includes “ownership of institutional learning outcomes and their assessment...”

In response, WesternU has been diligently working on creating a culture of evidence that moves beyond the requirements of specialized accrediting agencies and licensure passage rates used in the past. The University has developed new criteria for program review, as well as a new handbook and new review procedures, including review of the internal self-studies, accreditation reports and other external evaluations, and program action plans by the Senate’s Academic Standards and Policy Committee. For programs

without specialized professional accreditation, the external review is conducted by a WesternU-appointed external review team.

Faculty and staff have been working collaboratively on the program review process. The University has provided funds and resources to educate and support them in this endeavor. The stringent requirements of many of the specialized bodies accrediting WesternU programs lend themselves to constant and continual quality improvement and curricular revisions based on evidence of student learning. The external accrediting bodies often establish student learning outcomes for the educational programs, with standards of performance at the point of graduation. Assessment within individual programs is rich, with programs having mechanisms in place for authentic assessment such as clinical and laboratory experiences that require an integration and application of knowledge. This type of education has multiple stakeholders participating in students' assessment, including clinical site supervisors, alumni, and professionals in the field.

The Commission action letter also asked that further steps be taken to ensure better alignment of program review findings with planning efforts and budgetary allocations. The University has been very responsive in dealing with this issue. As noted above, each completed program review is now reviewed by the Senate's Academic Standards and Policy Committee, which allows for faculty input on cross-cutting academic issues, including those that may have budgetary implications. In addition, this process also

opens a communication channel for information to flow within the faculty and among the colleges. The process was very clearly articulated in the Special Visit Report:

“To more closely align program review findings with planning and budgeting, the University also modified the way in which action plans are generated.

Previously, the program review self-study and supporting documents were read by the Provost, who subsequently produced a memorandum of understanding that outlined actions to be taken by the program before the next review. The responsibility for creating improvement plans has now been shifted from the Provost to the programs under review. Taking into account recommendations from the external review team and WesternU’s Academic Standards and Policy Committee, programs submit plans for improvement via an internally developed template. The process also allows programs to identify additional resources that may be required to accomplish their plan. Action plan templates are submitted to the Office of the Provost immediately following completion of the review. This timing provides the Provost and the CFO with sufficient time to review plans in advance of the University’s annual budgeting cycle so that proper consideration of their budget requests may be given.”

During the onsite visit, a number of faculty from programs that were currently going through or had just previously been through program review were interviewed. When asked about the benefit of the current system of program review in comparison to the previous system, they unanimously reported that, with the current system, they felt more of a connection to the University and the mission of the University. They also

reported a benefit in having a systematic way for a faculty committee to have input on the findings and the action plan validating the needs of the program. Another advantage was the formalization of the process for the Provost to meet and respond to the action plan established by the program and supported by the Academic Standards and Policy Committee.

Team members found program reviews themselves to be extensive and rich in data. However, action plans rarely addressed curricular matters, dealing mostly with the financial needs of the program. Faculty response to a query in this regard reported that curriculum changes were handled on a continual basis to respond to the needs of the ever changing clinical environment. The University may want to include a section in the program review criteria that asks programs to report on curricular changes that have occurred since the last program review.

The program review process itself has not had time to be assessed. All programs have not completed program review under the new campus process or collected data long enough to create accurate and valid benchmarks or be able to take a longer-term view of program quality. As the process matures, there should be a mechanism in place to perform a comprehensive analysis of how well it has worked and also of program review results across all the programs of the institution. Additionally, by the next WSCUC visit, there should be examples of how effective the program review process is in informing strategic planning and budgeting.

Turning to the University's methodology of assessing student learning, this is clearly an area of institutional strength. Programs have developed many mechanisms to

ensure accurate assessment reporting and the integration of approaches, analysis, and application (closing the assessment loop). The team observed rich examples of integrated assessment. For example, the physical therapy program presented a poster of a project that occurred at the end of students' first year of education. The program gave students a two-hour, integrated, case-based "lab practical" that asked them to demonstrate a clinical treatment assessing the ability to read a chart, look up information on the diagnosis, develop a treatment plan, carry it out, and document the treatment. Students received a comprehensive evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses and had to develop an academic plan to address their areas of deficiency. There were many other examples like this across the curriculum. The College of Osteopathic Medicine developed a sophisticated "portal" to track student performance, reporting on student progress as well as continual assessment of student strengths and areas of weakness. This portal enables the development of reports on student progress with PLOs and ILOs, as well as actual areas of study such as pathology or the basic sciences. This tool is used by faculty and advisors to help students identify weaknesses early on and remediate quickly. These are examples of assessment at its best.

The Commission had expressed interest in seeing evidence of faculty "ownership of institutional learning outcomes and their assessment." This is an area in which WesternU now shines. The University has implemented an extensive system for measuring ILOs that requires their alignment with program learning outcomes. The system, though at an early stage of implementation, appears to track both institution- and program-level performance and provide data for strategic decision-making.

As described in the WesternU report and confirmed in the onsite visit, the University has developed eight Institutional Learning Outcomes. The assessment of these eight ILOs is scheduled over a four-year period, resulting in two ILOs being assessed per year. Each program has aligned its PLOs to the ILOs, as demonstrated through curricular maps. The cycle for assessing the ILOs can essentially result in a simultaneous assessment of all of the PLOs, if a program so chooses. Programs are asked to submit a signature assignment for each ILO. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness works with the assessment director or designee for each program through the University's Assessment and Program Review Committee. There is a detailed template for annual assessment reports that helps guide a comprehensive methodology, including an analysis and a "closing the loop" section.

Multiple annual ILO assessments were provided to the team for review. Findings included alignment of the PLO to the ILOs (as well as to specialized accreditation criteria). The annual assessment template and the overall assessment infrastructure are comprehensive in their requirement of data and documentation. The template and the infrastructure go a long way in contributing to a comprehensive examination of curricular quality and, ultimately, to the cyclical process of academic program review.

Turning to co-curricular assessment, the Commission expressed concern that assessment in co-curricular units was not proceeding as aggressively as it was in the academic program arena. It asked that the institution be more aggressive in calendaring these assessments.

In its review, the visiting team found a co-curricular program review template, process, and timeline in place. Two reviews – one of the Library and the other of Student Activities – have already been completed. The Student Activities report was comprehensive but did not include direct assessment of student learning. In a meeting during the onsite visit, it was stated that there were plans to begin assessment of direct learning; but, at this point, most of the time and resources had been devoted to developing outcomes and creating alignment matrixes as well as writing the other components of the program review that evaluated operations.

Program review of co-curricular programs is relatively new to WesternU. Nevertheless, the review process is proceeding according to a set timeline, with the expectation of greater attention to co-curricular learning and its correlation with learning in the academic arena.

In closing this section of the team report, mention should be made of the Commission's concern that the campus begin to turn its attention to the requirements of the WSCUC 2013 Handbook and its focus on the "meaning, quality, and integrity" of degrees; student performance in graduate-level competencies at the time of graduation; and more visionary institutional planning for the new "ecology" of learning.

As of yet, there is little evidence that WesternU is integrating the new WSCUC criteria into its program review and assessment endeavors. However, given all the institution is doing in these areas; given the intense focus on institutional learning outcomes and on inter-professional education; and given the professional nature of campus programs and their relation to specialized accreditation requirements, it is well

positioned to develop standards of performance and assessable definitions of the meaning, quality, and integrity of its various degrees. It is recommended that the campus begin as soon as possible to integrate the new WSCUC criteria into its assessment and program review infrastructure.

Strategic Planning and Budgeting

[CFRs 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, and 4.2 of the 2008 Handbook]

WesternU has been undertaking an intense effort to engage in meaningful and comprehensive strategic planning. The Commission applauded this effort. It indicated that it “noted with approval the [previous] visiting team’s finding that, going forward, ‘the new strategic planning cycle will focus on strengthening institutional infrastructures and program quality, rather than growth,’ and expects that this will be borne out in future interactions with WASC. . . .”

The visiting team had a number of opportunities to discuss strategic planning and budgeting with faculty and administrators, including meetings with the Provost and his staff and with the leaders of the Academic Senate. Additionally, a comprehensive discussion was held with members of the University’s Strategic Planning Committee and its seven working groups. During this meeting, team members had an opportunity to review the latest iteration of the “University Strategic Planning Structure,” which calls for the establishment of a new, eight-member, “standing” Strategic Planning Implementation Steering Committee chaired by the Vice Provost and including one faculty representative. The committee is charged with:

- Articulation and implementation of Vision and Strategic Plan;
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of existing and new plans to provide information for funding and support decisions;
- Scanning the environment for new opportunities or paradigms to actualize the Strategic Plan and Vision;

- Communicating strategic planning activities to internal and external audiences;
- Evaluating and addressing infrastructure needs to ensure plan success.

While there is no University-wide budget committee for resource allocation decisions, the Strategic Planning Implementation Steering Committee is supposed to give input to the Provost and the CFO on funding.

Planning takes place at several levels. The Faculty Handbook states that the Academic Support Services and Planning Committee of the Academic Senate “shall participate in university strategic planning and other planning processes within the various support service units” that “impact the faculty, the quality of the curriculum, and student education.”

The visiting team heard confidence with regard to planning and budget making—that “we are part of the University now.” Senate leaders felt they were “being heard actively” and that administration “valued input” on such items as copyright policy, syllabus templates, new and expanded program policy, and strategic planning, including space planning. Rather than a typical formal budget advisory committee, there appears to be ongoing collaboration on budget throughout the year and through regular monthly meetings between the Provost and Academic Senate Chair.

The open meeting with faculty tested anecdotally how the new systems might work and be perceived. Responses were, as expected, mixed. Space demand is growing in the College of Osteopathic Medicine and the College of Pharmacy, so that topic dominated. This correlates with recently increased hires of more research-intensive faculty, associated with greatly increased NIH funding in the range of \$12M. It was

perceived by some that space was previously totally under administrative control but that it is different now. Some faculty in the College of Osteopathic Medicine want greater input into the design of laboratory space. Others said that, for the past year, people have been involved at the earliest conceptual design stage, because the Academic Support Services and Planning Committee works through the Academic Senate with the Facilities Department, researchers, and a Space Planning Committee. Some members of the College of Pharmacy faculty were less certain, feeling the College was at a critical stage of lab space need, yet feeling unsure that committees pass on the College's reports and uncertain who makes final decisions on space. Such dissenting opinions might be expected during the early, ongoing evolutionary phases of the organizational structures linking planning to budget. On the contrary side of opinion were statements that renovation of classrooms in the College of Pharmacy actually started with the faculty and that research laboratories benefitted from faculty input in design. Still others reported that the Patient Care Center benefitted from lots of faculty input into its design seven years ago. Lebanon faculty reported that they design laboratory shells that are then finished for them. Faculty reported increased attention being paid by administration to the Academic Senate in general. One can summarize this anecdotal evidence by concluding that shared governance in planning, interaction of faculty with administration, and connections between planning and budget are evolving, have occasional growing pains, but demonstrate a positive trend.

The deans and the Provost's Office members weighed in further with their perspectives on planning as it is tied to budgeting. Planning for faculty lines occurs at

the University level, and budgets for faculty lines compete across schools. This becomes an incentive to complete the external reviews of programs, as those reviews often determine the timing and success of new or replacement faculty positions for a school. The deans perceive that the current strategic planning process is valuable to them and that it is now clearer where they fit in the process. The deans perceive that the schools have substantial autonomy; but by that they mean they manage budget expenditures. However, budget allocations are centralized, even as management is then decentralized. This allows deans sufficient programmatic autonomy, much greater than before; yet they made it clear that “it is the President and the Board who really approve all new programs.”

In discussions with Academic Senate officers, the team asked whether there was administrative support for planning of academic, co-curricular, and non-academic support services. They reported that the Academic Senate has influence at every level—discussion and input, but not ultimately “clout.” They reiterated what was heard elsewhere that “the University keeps the budget close to its vest.”

A discussion with the Strategic Planning Committee and representatives from its seven working groups summarized the current impact of planning and budgeting. The existing strategic plan for the University is dated 2005-2015. The new planning process now is much more engaging of faculty, and it seems quite strong to the new faculty who have recently come from other institutions. Considering overall goals, there are no plans for significant growth of the University. The vision is being changed to perhaps ultimately include undergraduate programs; but the mission is being kept as is. The

faculty expect to have input into strategic initiatives by ranking budget priorities within their recommendation process. Rankings will depend on the development of multi-disciplinary partnerships among programs, feasibility, revenue generation, and alignment with the science/caring/humanism mission.

In phase I of this new process, working groups did an environmental scan and in 2012-13 identified seven overarching goals and 31 objectives. In phase II, in 2013-14, the current seven working groups were formed around the current strategic initiatives to be achieved. Phase III is now in progress, with the establishment of the Strategic Plan Implementation Steering Committee. \$4.2 million has been approved by the administration for this fiscal year to fund the first initiatives; for next year, \$4.6 million has been proposed to the Board of Trustees. Initiatives are presented to the Board at early stages. The tie to the budget comes at the initial approval of initiatives. There is also a quarterly re-assessment of funds, which can impact future budgets

One fast-changing area that illustrates a potential future challenge for tying planning to budget is the growth in the research enterprise. According to one comment at the meeting with department chairs, associate deans, and program heads, the research enterprise “sixteen years ago was almost nothing, at about \$200,000 annually; it is now burgeoning at approximately \$12 million.”

Compliance Checklist

As was evident during the visit, WesternU is undergoing rapid and significant change through the development and creation of new policies and procedures. While

the University has most of the required compliance documentation in place, many of the documents will need to be reviewed during the next comprehensive review to ensure that WSCUC expectations and requirements have been met as policies and practices are revised and developed. One area under development related to governance includes the governance responsibilities of the Board of Trustees. Prior to the next visit, the Board should review its bylaws and operations documentation in the context of the WSCUC "Independent Governing Board Policy." Specifically, the Board is developing a policy and procedure for the evaluation of the President/CEO. At the time of the Special Visit, the Board had not yet reviewed the draft, which in effect is more a salary compensation review than a performance assessment. This policy, as well as the complete bylaws of the Board, should be carefully reviewed during the comprehensive visit for full compliance as well as internal consistency.

Commendations

1. WesternU has made substantial progress in implementing an effective model of faculty governance, including:
 - a. Creating new Academic Senate committees;
 - b. Creating guidelines for the review and approval of new or expanded academic programs with faculty participation through Senate committees;
 - c. Engaging broad faculty participation in a developing governance structure;
 - d. Offering opportunities to cultivate Senate leaders; and
 - e. Engaging faculty in strategic planning and decision-making.

2. The University has documented significant progress in developing a culture of evidence through:
 - a. Assessing student learning at the program level and developing reports rich with data, analysis, and implications for use;
 - b. Assessing institutional learning outcomes, with each college mapping its program learning outcomes to the ILOs;
 - c. Establishing a highly effective inter-professional education program;
 - d. Integrating new program review standards with specialized accreditation requirements; and
 - e. Creating mechanisms for sharing best practices and new ideas across colleges through committees and other means.

3. WesternU has made commendable progress in developing new policies and procedures to enhance and develop both systematic quality improvement and a culture of collaboration, communication, and participation (including colleagues at the Lebanon, Oregon campus and adjunct faculty) among the colleges and between the faculty and the administration.

Recommendations

1. Continue developing effective faculty participation in shared governance in anticipation of the next WSCUC comprehensive review, with attention to:
 - a. Reviewing and clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and titles of the three Senate standing committees to ensure alignment of intent with committee practice, including an evaluation of unnecessary duplication of committee efforts;
 - b. Establishing a process for University-level review and approval of revisions to existing curricula;
 - c. Increasing faculty engagement in reviewing academic policies and setting academic standard across colleges;
 - d. Formalizing a mechanism for increased and systematic faculty input into prioritizing resource allocations;
 - e. Improving communication about the role and impact of shared governance more broadly among faculty; and
 - f. Evaluating the new Senate structure by documenting how well it functions, how committees relate to each other and to the colleges, and how the evolving

structure of shared governance will serve the future development of WesternU.

2. Continue to develop and extend the emerging culture of evidence at WesternU through:
 - a. Anticipating meeting the requirements of the 2013 WSCUC Handbook, especially the "Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of Degrees," by offering evidence that WesternU has assessed and documented what the institution expects its students to know and be able to do upon graduation and how graduates embody the distinct values and traditions of the University and
 - b. Completing sufficient academic and co-curricular program reviews, assessments of learning, and other indications of quality so as to have evidence of institution-wide quality assurance by the time of the comprehensive review.

3. Continue to develop, review, and improve policies and procedures to ensure that WesternU has fully and effectively met Compliance Checklist requirements as well as WSCUC Standards and Criteria for Review by the time of its next comprehensive review in 2016-17, with special attention to:
 - a. Clear policies for the peer review of faculty and performance review of and succession planning for administrators;
 - b. Governance at both the faculty-administration level and the Board-administration level; and
 - c. Policies related to faculty appointments and contracts, including clarification of

the policies related to multi-year contracts.