

3. Do you think the term “Christ-centered” is an accurate substitute for the term *Bible-based faith*?
4. Are there terms other than “Christ-centered” that you prefer?

All the groups were enthusiastic about their participation in the redesign of a SLO considered to be essential in reflecting the educational philosophy and purposes of LLU. Twenty-four focus groups were held which involved over 300 participants from across campus.

Results: Ultimately, the majority of participants felt that the symbolism of the message needed to convey an idea that supported the University’s emphasis on *wholeness*, of “service to mankind in Christ,” and “to do as Christ did.” These sentiments were strongly reflected in the participants’ explanations of how they strive to demonstrate a *Bible-based faith* in their everyday interactions with students. Many noted that this is accomplished by openly sharing about faith and personal responsibility, including short reflections and/or devotions before class, and notably in numerous one-to-one interactions with students—something many students as well as faculty and staff refer to as the “special LLU touch”(i.e., access to and time for students to talk to their professors regarding issues ranging from academics, to personal, and to spiritual). All, and especially faculty participants of faith communities other than Seventh-day Adventist, stated that they valued the ability to share their values and beliefs without feeling odd or pressured to do so. All were in agreement that the overall atmosphere and shared value system at LLU was more driven by a Christ-like service orientation than by religious doctrine.

This is not to say that participants did not grapple with letting go of the “Bible-based” wording, even with its varied interpretations. Nearly all acknowledged the importance of having a strong Bible-based foundation. Many stated that LLU should not make apologies or hold back “who we are,” but recognize that this is the reason most students choose to attend LLU. Participants also felt that many of our students, while coming from different faiths, attend LLU to find a spiritual, safe home that is organized around transformational values that will impact their professional preparation and future careers. Others pointed out that for many of our off-campus programs in countries with non-Christian cultures, it was important to insure that final wording be inclusive enough to embrace these students without compromising our core identity to serve as “Christ-like.” As such, it was noted that “service to others

transcends cultures” and shares what LLU truly represents.

Final Reflections: Notably, the majority of the ardent dissenters who argued for retaining the “Bible-based” language were non-Seventh-day Adventist faculty. These individuals felt strongly that there was “nothing wrong” with the term and that it should not concern us if some disliked the phrase, as it clearly represented the institution’s position with respect to doctrine. In summary, participants supported SLO language that emphasized a strong Christian foundation, embraced Christ-like values, and demonstrated commitment to service and the concept of *wholeness*.

CONCLUDING ESSAY

In the years to come the learning that has and continues to take place on our campus is likely to be regarded as a notable period of transformational and organizational growth in our history. We now build upon the activities and accomplishments of the capacity review process to address the requirements needed to insure our ability to demonstrate educational effectiveness. Although we consider our institution to be one capable of self-evaluating and intentionally progressive in ways that have led to substantial change, we now realize that this is likely to reveal the need for yet more profound and introspective engagement. This emphasis on learning within the organization reflects our commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) and is directly associated with our need to strengthen the University’s culture of evidence within the context of moving towards a “community of shared excellence.” This effort as having three major foci: (a) strengthening our infrastructure to conduct assessment across diverse academic environments, (b) further implementing SLOs that embrace both the shared and diverse academic nature of the programs, and (c) infusing assessment results into our strategic planning, for CQI in support of our mission. The following outlines our plan:

Strengthening the assessment infrastructure across diverse academic environments.

Expansion of the understanding of our normative culture. Building on the learning derived from our organizational research, we recognize the need to learn how to capitalize on the richness of our shared understanding and appreciation for the mission and purposes of LLU. We did not know the depth to which our University community shared in their

commitment to this institution’s core character—we never assessed...we simply assumed. We now see this is an opportunity to move forward and be purposeful in quantifying a definition for our *normative culture* and use that knowledge to “grow what’s good and challenge what’s weak.”

Action Plan. Building on our shared understanding of LLU’s core character, we propose to continue the assessment dialogue of the *normative culture* focus groups. Initially, campus-wide discussions will emphasize the benefits of identifying ourselves with the classifications presented in the research. Those discussions also will address the challenges of other private religiously oriented universities that lost their initial and essential purposes. An understanding of the category that most closely approximates LLU’s *normative culture* will assist in guiding institutional decisions that reflect openness to possible changes while simultaneously maintaining a commitment to our Adventist heritage. This dialogue may provide additional insights as to how we should continue this journey from silos to community, how we choose to expand both globally and locally, as well as how we identify opportunities to capitalize on our shared values, and ultimately, our *mission-focused learning*.

Infrastructure to support assessment and institutional learning. Extraordinary progress has been made in building an infrastructure to support the development of shared assessment and learning about our institution. With progress has come an even stronger desire to make sure “we get it right.” For example, rather than relying only on the individual assessment processes that reside with schools and programs, we intentionally chose to develop systems that would not only strengthen the previous capacity, but also promote institution-wide learning that can only be achieved through University-wide assessment. Thus far, this effort has required the University to develop a vision for changing existing processes and to put forth considerable resources, including hardware and software, as well as personnel with sufficient expertise to develop and deploy these operations.

Action Plan. To further what has been accomplished thus far we must proceed to: (a) develop consistency in the use of shared academic definitions (e.g., what constitutes a distinct degree program, or how do we consistently calculate full-time faculty within a diverse clinical context); (b) establish coherence between the academic system

(Banner™), the human resources system (PeopleSoft™), and multiple existing clinical tracking systems (varied approaches) that count faculty numbers differently; (c) procure external consultation to assist in a review of campus-wide data processes and related issues, and to provide recommendations to address the alignment of the University’s data needs with strategic planning to sustain its mission and purposes; (d) continue to refine our business processes and re-engineer to support systematic program review and record keeping (e.g., document flow and online management systems); (e) expand faculty development using activities that strengthen capacity (i.e., the advising and utilization of new academic systems to support assessment); (f) realize the maximum potential of the Centennial Complex as a global gateway that facilitates a University-wide shared learning environment that supports institutional learning as well as the enhanced capacity for life-long learning through coordinated continuing education activities; and (g) continue to invest the needed financial resources to complete software design and infrastructure development.

Implementing University-wide SLOs and furthering systematic program review. A major shift from our original proposal was the perceived need to develop a framework for campus-wide assessment activities that are focused on the centrality of *mission-focused learning*. Although this added considerable effort to an already full capacity review agenda, we believe a correct choice was made in prioritizing the building of an infrastructure from which University-wide assessment could occur.

Action Plan. Prior to the Educational Effectiveness Review visit we will continue to refine and implement the Assessment Plan over the next 18 months. This will further enhance the University’s capacity to evaluate if we are achieving our SLOs. In addition, we will continue with the original schedule, as outlined in the Institutional Proposal, to execute the systematic program review cycles for all University programs.

Infusing assessment results to support strategic planning and continuous quality improvement. We believe that new senior leadership has revolutionized the institution’s approach to strategic planning with *mission-focused learning* at the foundation. This will enable Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center (LLUAHSC) to pursue a shared vision for the institution’s future. A high priority will be placed on reflecting our core

values in all corporate operations—indeed for the first time, comprehensive strategic planning is an integrated function of our campus culture.

Action Plan. Assessment results will be used to inform the new LLUAHSC strategic planning process. As a part of this process, attention will be given to documenting where assessment results are used to drive continuous quality improvement. Our online assessment matrix will allow us to track program changes, including any that result at the University, school, or program levels. The achievements of this process will be evaluated for their impact on *mission-focused learning* and our capacity to realize educational effectiveness.

In conclusion, the assessment process, development of capacity, and quality improvement initiatives have required considerable effort and commitment, but the results achieved are regarded both as essential and as invigorating for our institution. The lessons learned from these experiences have allowed us to expand our own development as mature learners, committed to the transparency of our processes, and the need for critical self-assessment of our strengths and challenges. We also recognize our need to continue this valuable journey.

ENDNOTES

¹ *Mission-focused learning* (MFL) combines the best traditions of an outcomes-based education and learning by doing, with service to community. MFL combines the goals of “service-learning” with those of selfless volunteerism; it is motivated by the example of Jesus Christ who lived to bring hope, healing and happiness to mankind. LLU’s commitment to MFL derives from its belief that learning transforms lives. The greatest transformation comes through selfless service to others. This reinforces our core values and encourages civic responsibility within communities. MFL, as well as service learning, utilize experiences that originate and grow from contemplation on the meaning of events; clinical approaches; the needs of others; and the development of skills and knowledge to create a healthier society and world. MFL is a learning approach that looks for, and plans for, “teachable moments” where theory and practical reality come together in “ah-ha” moments. LLU is committed to providing an approach to higher education that blends the professional with the personal and where graduates approach their health care profession not as a mere job, but as a calling to service. Such learning brings a truer understanding of our core values, builds character, and brings meaning to the saying “who you are is more important than what you know.” Through MFL we prepare students for a dedicated life-long journey of service to all mankind.

² This added examination later supported the revision of all of LLU’s SLOs.

³ The Seventh-day Adventist Church owns and operates the largest Protestant health care and educational delivery system in the world, and LLU is often referenced as the flagship of this system. LLU is known for its health care leadership in many disciplines and is considered one of the major academic medical centers on the west coast. A recent presentation to the LLU Board of Trustees by noted economist John Husing, highlighted LLU’s positive impact on the regional economy at two billion dollars annually.

⁴ As the EEC moved forward to implement the Institutional Proposal, it was found necessary to increase the input of campus constituents as well as attend to the multifaceted nature of the Committee’s charter. Subsequently, three subcommittees—Research Themes, Program Review, and Capacity Review—were created and populated with representatives from all schools. In the case of the Capacity Review Subcommittee, members represented all of the central administrative and student services on campus.

⁵ The following entities have endorsed the University’s SLOs to ensure that they are understood and integrated into curricular, co-curricular, and extra curricular programs: LLU Board of Trustees, University Leadership Council, Interschool Faculty Advisory Council, Chancellor’s Committee, Dean’s Council, University Officers, University Academic Affairs Committee, Academic Deans Council, Assessment Committee, student leaders who have been exposed to the revised LLU SLOs through their membership on central academic committees, and faculty who have been given the new LLU SLOs at faculty meetings and via the standardized online syllabi. In addition, the SLOs are posted on the Office of Assessment and Institutional Learning web site.

⁶ <http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/programs/>

⁷ <http://www.llu.edu/assessment/>

⁸ Methodological refinement with the Wholeness Inventory (WI) led to revisions between 2001 and 2005. Differences in school-specific response rates limits comparative study, and these concerns continue to be addressed with progress toward a comprehensive data collection system.

⁹ Interschool Faculty Advisory Council (IFAC) - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/ifac/>

¹⁰ Office of Academic Affairs - <http://www.llu.edu/academicaffairs/>

¹¹ ChapelCasts - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/chaplain/chapelcasts>

¹² In the Institutional Proposal the primary focus on student learning outcomes was the research study related to the Bible-based faith. Although it was known that some attention would be given to the revision of LLU’s 17 original student learning outcomes, the effort summarized here goes far beyond what was originally conceptualized.

¹³ University Student Learning Outcomes, p. 3.

¹⁴ *LLU Faculty Handbook* - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/facultyhandbook/>

¹⁵ Office of Community Partnerships and Diversity - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/diversity/>

¹⁶ Center for Health Disparities and Molecular Medicine - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/medicine/chdmm/>

¹⁷ *LLU University Catalog* - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/publications/view_pub.php

¹⁸ University Standardized Online Syllabus Template - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/classes/course_information.php

¹⁹ *LLU Administrative Handbook*, I-01: "Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action" - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/administrativehandbook/index.php?dir=I-Personnel/>

²⁰ *LLU Student Handbook*: p. 56 - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/documents/2006-07student-handbook.pdf>

²¹ Online Syllabus Template System - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/classes/course_information.php

²² *LLU Student Handbook*, Office of Diversity, p. 40 - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/documents/2006-07student-handbook.pdf>

²³ *LLU Catalog 2008-2009* - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/publications/view_pub.php

²⁴ A recent discovery stimulated by our WASC self-study CPR process has been the awareness that Schools define "programs" differently. Differences in definitions of "programs" even vary within some Schools at the academic department level. Efforts to standardize definitions of such terms as concentrations, tracks, majors, and minors have again re-focused our attention to the need of becoming a more unified and systematic university.

²⁵ Online Program Review System - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/programs/academic_dashboard.php

²⁶ University Assessment Committee - <http://www.llu.edu/assessment/assessmentcommittee.html>

²⁷ Online Program Review System - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/programs/academic_dashboard.php

²⁸ Course Articulations - http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/articulation_schools.php

²⁹ The Sun Never Sets on LLU (global map) - <http://llu.edu/assessment/globalmap.html>

³⁰ Centennial Complex - <http://llu.edu/centennial/complex/>

³¹ Office of Assessment - <http://www.llu.edu/assessment>

³² LLU Blackboard™ - <https://lluonline.llu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

³³ LLU Helpdesk - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/lluis/support.html>

³⁴ LLU Telehealth - <http://www.llu.edu/telehealth/about.html>

³⁵ Educational Support Services - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/ess/>

³⁶ Student Services - <http://www.llu.edu/ssweb/>

³⁷ Center for Spiritual Life and Wholeness - <http://www.llu.edu/llu/wholeness/>

³⁸ The nexus between colleges and churches continued even after the establishment of land grant colleges under the Morrill Act of 1862 (Burtchaell, 1998; Goodlad, 2002), which provided homesteaders with 40-acre allotments to form colleges emphasizing agricultural and related community development.

³⁹ These themes are discussed in more detail in the complete report that will be available in the Evidence Room during the October 2008 site visit.

⁴⁰ Note: the groups were done during the Fall quarter. Since then a new more formal Campus Worship curriculum has been implemented. We will be exploring how this may have changed students' opinions on this issue.

⁴¹ At the time of the Faculty Colloquium it had not yet been determined that prioritizing and focusing on select SLOs was preferred over revising all of the SLOs simultaneously.



From humble beginnings (the original Loma Linda Sanitarium)...

In The Impossible Dream:
Railway to the Moon
(Cheatham, et al., 2005), the University recounts decade-by-decade a history that includes crisis, survival, giant leaps, a new name, and a new century in a new millennium. The history of LLU is more than a record of past events; it is the memories that live, the dreams that become reality, the hope that builds success. It is about dedicated students, alumni, faculty, staff and administrators, whose service to humanity has left a positive impact on our planet.



...to a state-of-the-art teaching and learning environment (Centennial Complex)