

**REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM  
CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW**

**LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY**

**OCTOBER 8-10, 2008**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION**

**Team Roster**

David A. Kessler, Chair

James Gregory Troll, Assistant Chair/team Editor

Denis J. Meerdink, Team Member

Barbara J. Piepho, Team Member

Kelly E. Wahl, Team Member

Joanne J. Zitelli, Team Member

The evaluation team in conducting its review was able to evaluate the institution according to Commission Standards and the Core Commitment for Institutional Capacity and therefore submits this Report to the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges for action and to the institution for consideration.



## Introduction

Loma Linda University (LLU) is a Seventh-day Adventist University focused on health sciences located in Loma Linda, California. The University had its beginnings as the College of Medical Evangelists in 1905 and became Loma Linda University in 1961, when it received its first WASC accreditation. The institution evolved into its present form through various mergers and reorganizations, and in 1997, the University became part of a five-member corporation known as the Loma Linda University Adventist Health Sciences Center (LLUAHSC). LLU received its last reaccreditation under WASC in 1999. In 2006, WASC approved a substantive change as LLU clarified the corporate structure of LLUAHSC.

Approximately 4100 students are enrolled in 8 schools, with 70% of students at the graduate level and the undergraduate students consisting entirely of transfer students. About 77% of the students are full time. Currently the administration identifies over 220 individual programs (as defined as individual degree requirements). At least 36 independent professional accreditations are presently held by the institution, as required by individual professional health care programs.

LLU submitted its proposal for the current round of reaccreditation in 2006. A team of six members conducted the Capacity and Preparatory Review site visit from October 8-10, 2008. This report, which represents the consolidated findings of that team, is divided into three sections—an introduction, a review of the standards, and a commendations and recommendations section.

### **Standard 1: Defining Institutional Purposes and Ensuring Educational Objectives**

The published mission statement of Loma Linda University clearly articulates its purpose as a religious based health sciences institution. As such, the University "seeks to further

the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ to make man whole.” Central to its *mission-focused learning* is Loma Linda’s ability to provide experiences that offer “teachable moments” which enable faculty and students to integrate core institutional values, thereby transforming their personal lives and professional practice. Evidence of this mission focused learning is evident in the University’s wide range of commitments including its Students For International Mission Service, Community Academic Partners in Service, and the Social Action Community Health System. These programs demonstrate a unique and unwavering commitment to the University’s service mission. They are model programs for the nation and for which the University deserves to be proud. (CFR 1.1 & 1.2)

The University Board of Trustees has persons with leadership expertise to appropriately support the purposes of the University. LLU bylaws require the LLU Board of Trustees to review University policies and insure compliance. The LLU Board of Trustees understands and carries out its duty with regard to basic institutional policies through various standing subcommittees as well as by providing appropriate representation to ad hoc committees. The LLU Board of Trustees also conducts biannual self review. LLU actively seeks to maintain and demonstrate strong academic leadership centrally, in schools, and in the administration of all academic programs. The leadership capacity of central administration and deans is supported through a collaborative working environment and culture. This is aided by a supportive attitude for the University’s mission by the Medical Center CEO.

During our visit the site visit team saw evidence of a leadership system at all levels that is marked by high performance, appropriate responsibility, and accountability. Administrative positions are systematically evaluated, including the Chancellor, Vice Chancellors, Deans, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, and Department Chairs. Top administration is evaluated annually, whereas Deans and Department Chairs are reviewed every three years.

The University demonstrates commitment to the principles enunciated in the WASC Statement on Diversity. Policies and practices of the University prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability, sex, race, color, national origin, or disability relevant to recruitment, admissions, financial aid allocations, student evaluations, advisement, or any curriculum or curricular program provided.

The University has programs in place to actively recruit faculty and students to more closely reflect the population in the surrounding community. In support of this, University members have created a social and learning environment which promotes the development of professional and scholarly comportment embedded in a deep appreciation of and respect for human diversity. (CFR 1.5)

Policies of the University are in place to assure that members of the University do not engage in activities that could result in interference in substantive decisions or educational functions of the University or any of its enterprises.

Student grievance procedures are outlined in the University Student Handbook. In addition, each school has published procedures for the redress of academic grievances. Grievance procedures are handled through designated committees in each school. When investigating grievances, administration, faculty and staff demonstrate that they follow University policies, as well as published school and program policies.

In 2006 a campus-wide taskforce reviewed all grievance policies and procedures to assure the institution's integrity in these areas. Every effort is made to insure that administration, faculty, staff and students are informed of appropriate policies and grievance procedures.

The Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research Affairs monitors the compliance of student, faculty and staff researchers regarding the required knowledge and compliance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) requirements.

Loma Linda University adheres to national standards of academic freedom. Policies and practices that support academic freedom are well articulated and disseminated. In addition, in the meeting with the faculty, we learned that the relationship between the faculty and the administration has developed into a collaborative one, built on a mutual understanding of goals. The openness and transparency of the administration and the commitment and involvement of the faculty in building the architecture to achieve the campus's stated goals have facilitated this collaborative spirit. (CFR 1.3, 1.4, 3.11)

LLU faculty governance structure lies primarily within the eight individual schools. Consequently, the primary interface between faculty and administration is within these schools. However, a University-wide mechanism also exists with the Interschool Faculty Advisory Council (IFAC), which is recognized as the official faculty governance council. Faculty express a high degree of satisfaction for the ability to provide input and do believe there is a shared governance culture in Schools. They express a desire for some University-wide governance, but believe that the strong, school-based governance may make the IFAC somewhat redundant. Prompted by the administration, the IFAC is redefining its role at the University, and recently identified four primary areas in which their efforts will be focused during the current school year: 1) shared decision-making, 2) policy development, 3) effective communication, and 4) leadership experience. (pg 79-89 LLU CPR Report, Supplemental materials) The team recognizes the strong desire for faculty input and the degree of satisfaction expressed by several faculty groups for the administration's efforts to elicit that input. (CFR 3.11)

Loma Linda University prepared for the recent accreditation review, and presented a thorough and informative self-study with extensive supportive documents. The team notes the impressive presentation of the institution by way of the evidence room.

LLU clearly demonstrated its commitment to being open and honest with WASC. LLU has been, and continues to be, candid in all its communication with the Commission, reporting strengths, challenges, and efforts to further the learning and renewal of the institution. During

the visit, the administration, faculty, and various groups were forthright and reflective about the challenges they face. Everyone the site visit team met with conveyed the passion and commitment that is characteristic of the campus and attests to the institution's engagement with its students, faculty, and community. (CFR 1.9)

## **Standard 2: Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

A number of developments cited in the university self study report gave an initial impression of an engagement with the educational effectiveness paradigm that appeared to be sophisticated and apparently well developed. A moderately advanced implementation of the concepts of continuous educational effectiveness was indicated by such developments as the creation of the educational effectiveness committee, the academic affairs committee, the effort to move beyond silos of information and a planned process of University wide implementation of outcomes identification and regular strategic plan revision. Review of evidence submitted to the CPR review team showed an impressive amount of documentation of accreditation efforts from programs and the university. Discussions with the educational effectiveness committee, upper level administration and faculty were candid and helpful. The University did well in the domain of university-wide student learning outcomes and virtually all the programs attempted to address them. On review of the student learning outcomes for the programs, however, it became evident that many programs had difficulty identifying assessable outcomes. The team also could not find complete examples of following the data, reviewing, and analyzing it for evidence of learning, or using the information to make changes or address issues, with iterative follow-up. Analysis of the documentation produced by Loma Linda suggested an initial or emerging stage of development in the domain of educational effectiveness as manifested by program review. Most of the program review was planned but not yet executed. (CFR 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7)

The team suspected that one of the difficulties the University has had in executing educational effectiveness might be a manifestation of the resource relationship of the

central University and the independently developed and almost autonomous schools and programs. More resources going to University infrastructure could support sustained outcome evidence analysis and quality improvement. Additional expertise in the concept and application of educational effectiveness might also be helpful.

### **Standard 3: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability**

LLU has paid particular attention to ensuring that the proper faculty and staff are in place given the recent hires and re-organization of departments.

Loma Linda University has a continuous planning process that assures that a sufficient number of full-time faculty are in place to secure accreditation by external professional accrediting agencies. The faculty possesses the appropriate background by discipline, degree levels, and specialization.

Each school develops and adopts a faculty workload policy appropriate to its various programs and faculty. The policies take into consideration education, research, and service including clinical and administrative responsibilities.

There is a deep commitment from faculty, staff, and administration to the mission, and values of the institution. They are dedicated to the philosophy “to make man whole” and base their mission-focused learning on this tenant. (CFR 3.1, 3.3, 3.2)

The University has a twenty-year history of impressive financial stability. Over the past five years Loma Linda University has increased its net assets by \$198 million. During this same period LLU has received unqualified audited financial statements from external auditors. Endowments have grown in value over \$50 million dollars. This increase in endowment value will help to sustain the University for many years to come. Enrollment has increased in the past five years approximately 39.3% and contributes 32%



of budgeted revenue. Giving of alumni in support of the university is significant; however, strategic plans for future development efforts are unclear. Financial policies and procedures are in place and well documented in the LLUAHSC Administrative Policy Handbook, Section D & R. (CFR 3.5)

The budgeting process begins in the schools. The Operations committee then prepares the annual budget with input from the various schools and departments all across campus. The budget is presented to the Board for approval in May. Each school is responsible for monitoring its budgets; however, it is the Senior Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs and the University Controller who are responsible for overall management of the budget. (CFR 3.1, 3.5)

The University is growing and expanding its facilities to meet the needs of its students and programs. Growth and expansion are occurring on campus to fill a need for more space for faculty, student learning, and on-campus health care, such as the new School of Dentistry building, which when occupied will open up space for other programs in existing buildings. The Centennial Complex is an example of the University's commitment to move from silos to a community-based model. When completed, the complex will contain smart classrooms and a wireless environment. It will be the primary location for Educational Support Services, distance learning, and Technology. (CFR 3.6, 3.7)

Information Technology provides support to the administrative and educational needs of the institution through the University's Educational Support Services. They work closely with all degree and co-curricular support areas to fulfill the institutions educational purposes and the related administrative functions. There has been a substantial expansion of the University's information and library resources. The addition of the position of Vice Chancellor for Information Systems demonstrates the University's commitment to nurture the internal activities of technology. One of the institutional changes near completion is the Academic Management System that manages student information, course and program information, and faculty portfolios and activities. The

University's physical plant expansion plans show that the continuing growth of the University has led, and continues to lead, to substantial expansion to ensure that programs have sufficient space and access to information technology. During the past 10 years, the University has submitted 23 degree programs for review by WASC and all have been approved. These programs were developed within the context of LLU's Philosophy of Distance Education. Distance Education is supported by robust infrastructure that includes a Course Management System supported by Blackboard Academic Suite and Endnote. (CFR 3.1, 3.6, 3.7)

. Loma Linda has had long term dynamic and effective leadership for many years, with the Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer having primary responsibility to the University. Recently several leadership positions and departments have been added to the infrastructure to reinforce the commitment to institutional learning. The organizational structure and decision-making processes at LLU are consistent with the institution's purpose and responsibilities. Lines of authority are clear and reflected in the organizational chart. (CFR 3.8, 3,10)

Decisions and recommendations are made at the school level and either begin with faculty or are vetted through faculty before being finalized. Issues are presented at the weekly meeting of the Deans and consensus has developed as decisions are made and agreed upon. This process is supported by the University central functions; however, the University organizational structure is not yet developed to provide the necessary level of support and planning. An important decision to be made by the leadership of the University, is whether the current chancellor position will be redefined in name and function by a provost position. This decision has important ramifications for the institution. (CFR 3.8)

LLU has a governing board that exercises appropriate oversight of the policies as well as the fiscal and ongoing operations of the University as supported by the LLU By-Laws. It is the responsibility of the board to approve the annual budget and the strategic plan. The trustees approve the academic and administrative organization of the

institution and the appointment of faculty and administrators. They also hire and evaluate the Chancellor. (CFR 3.9)

### **Organizational Structures and Decision Making Processes.**

Loma Linda has had long term dynamic and effective leadership for many years, with the Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer having primary responsibility to the University. Recently several leadership positions and departments have been added to the infrastructure to reinforce the commitment to institutional learning. The organizational structure and decision-making processes at LLU are consistent with the institution's purpose and responsibilities. Lines of authority are clear and reflected in the organizational chart. (CFR 3.8 ,3,10)

Decisions and recommendations are made at the school level and either begin with faculty or are vetted through faculty before being finalized. Issues are presented at the weekly meeting of the Deans and consensus is developed as decisions are made and agreed upon. This process is supported by the University central functions; however, the University organizational structure is not yet developed to provide the necessary level of support and planning. An important decision to be made by the leadership of the University, is whether the current chancellor position will be redefined in name and function by a provost position. This decision has important ramifications for the Institution. (CFR 3.8)

LLU has a governing board that exercises appropriate oversight of the policies as well as the fiscal and ongoing operations of the University as supported by the LLU By-Laws. It is the responsibility of the board to approve the annual budget and the strategic plan. The trustees approve the academic and administrative organization of the institution and the appointment of faculty and administrators. They also hire and evaluate the Chancellor. (CFR 3.9)

#### **Standard 4: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement**

Loma Linda University's commitment to becoming a learning organization has taken the form of offices and committees being charged with implementing a variety of processes and undertaking specific institutional research projects. Serving primary roles are the Office of Assessment and Institutional Learning, the Educational Effectiveness Committee, the University Assessment Committee, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Information Systems. A considerable effort has been expended to make evident a "culture of evidence," one that can serve the decision-making processes on campus (CRF 4.1); however, actual data-driven decision making and quality improvement review cycles have been undertaken most effectively only within the various schools and programs on campus. (pg 5-6 2008 LLU CPR report) For example, the School of Public Health and the School of Pharmacy have each assessed university-wide outcomes on a local basis, and Public Health has followed up with a response to the assessment in the form of faculty development, to enhance the organization's success in issues of faith being represented in a course's curriculum. At the center of the university's administration, such continuous quality improvement, based on data collected for this purpose, has yet to take root as a sustained function supported with adequate resources.

During a very short period of time, the institution has defined a critical need -- a comprehensive program review process, one appropriately focusing on student learning outcomes This review process, however, has been framed largely by the institution's exposure to WASC accreditation requirements (p. 5, 2008 CPR Report) and an expressed need to comply with the WASC standards and criteria for review. These standards and criteria are cited explicitly in the program review materials, for example, as prompts in the place of language crafted instead for its familiarity to the LLU community. The extent to which this program review process becomes institutionalized at LLU and supported with appropriate resources will attest to its validity and usefulness in the institution's planning processes. (CFR 4.3, 4.4).

The decentralized model for institutional research at LLU, which was described in the 1998 WASC visiting team's report, has neither sufficiently matured nor gathered adequate resources as a centralized operation to meet the needs of the institution. Embodied by the Office of Assessment and Institutional Learning, institutional research at the university remains in its infancy, is focused primarily at this point in time on learning outcomes assessment, and thus cannot as such fulfill all the needs the institution. The physical office space for the Office of Assessment is "virtual," with its three staff members housed under different roofs. Consisting of a director, an analyst, and administrative support, the office is charged with serving the needs of the program review process as it becomes part of the university's regular academic operation, along with pursuing a typical institutional research agenda for a university. It is simply impossible for a staff so small to succeed at such a task, particularly in light of how this staff joined the university fewer than two years ago and had no prior experience in the field of institutional research. Their hard work, dedication, and integrity must be commended; however, to date, an over-extension of the university's institutional research resources has left sizable gaps in the availability of data required for best practices in management. (CFR 4.5)

The required WASC data exhibits are described in the text of the 2008 CPR Report as being "difficult to compile" (p. 8) when their basis is a standard part of the reporting any institution should have at its disposal when an appropriately staffed institutional research office exists. The exhibits submitted demonstrate a first effort on the part of the university to create such reports on demand, and they contain the inconsistencies one would expect in such circumstances. With a history of separate calculations being performed among the schools to report enrollment by major, graduation rates, and other key descriptors of the institution, LLU falls short of a capacity for adequate reporting and pertinent analysis of institutional data at the highest organizational level. (pg 30 LLU CPR report 2008)

For example, conclusions in the written CPR self-study report cannot be substantiated using the data generated for the exhibit tables (e.g., incomparable denominators generate

ratios that cannot be used to demonstrate a trend, such as “a lower percentage of applicants with complete credentials were admitted and enrolled” -- p. 8, 2008 CPR Report). The data warehouse that serves as a critical data resource for institutional research was not designed by institutional research professionals, such that the technical resources designated for the warehouse’s construction and maintenance are stretched further by having to assume too many concurrent roles (i.e., that of institutional analyst in addition to that of database analyst). Year-to-year retention rates for undergraduate students need to be readily available, but given the inability of a transactional system to generate such reports they could not be provided in Table 3.2.

The information technology professionals on campus possess invaluable skills, and their commitment to providing useful tools such as the data warehouse is readily evident; however, they are stretched too thin to accommodate all the university’s needs for systems and analytics, and their expertise does not lie in the field of institutional research. A stronger central institutional research office would support this area’s operations, for example, by drawing on many years of institutional research experience in choosing data elements that would be most useful on the various data reporting dashboards that are in development. For the centralization of student service processes to succeed at LLU, in light of so many competing demands on information technology, and the undeniable value of improving students’ experience of these processes, the Vice Chancellor of Information Systems will require sufficient capacity.

At LLU today, the 1998 WASC team recommendation relating to research, that “the institution might wish to consider centralizing institutional research at some time in the future” (p. 16, 1998 team report), has been implemented mostly as a centralized student learning outcomes research effort that commenced within only a year or so of the institution’s CPR Report, with support for all other central institutional research coming from a single analyst. Given these conditions, faculty have been called upon to augment these resources. Beyond their participation in the program review development and implementation process, faculty serving on the Educational Effectiveness Committee have been charged to perform institutional research, in the form of mission-related

student outcomes research. Their projects served as the foundation for the research themes 1 and 2 explored in the CPR self-study.

The group chose to study “the association and linkage of the term Bible-based faith with the University’s core values and unique normative culture” (p. 28, 2008 CPR Report), as an effort to address the challenges of measuring the university’s published student learning outcomes (SLOs). The Educational Effectiveness Committee had decided to analyze one outcome initially and focused on this particular SLO (“Develop a Bible-based faith in God relevant to their personal lives and professional ministry”) because of 1) both the variety of interpretations of the SLO’s terminology by faculty, 2) the centrality of this outcome to “all aspects of the social and learning environment of LLU,” (p. 28, 2008 CPR Report) and 3) the passion exhibited by leadership regarding this outcome upon a first review of the language chosen to articulate it.

A six-month data collection period comprised 24 focus groups involving faculty, staff, students, and leadership, and the group participants were guided to consider the term Bible-based faith from the stated SLO, to provide real-world examples of this outcome, and to entertain alternatives to this term, such as “Christ-centered,” as an “accurate substitute” for the SLO’s existing language. This component of the study, per se, was an effort to examine how the term “Bible-based faith” was understood by the community and how or whether another term could be adopted to better represent the SLO.

The project engaged the community during a pivotal moment in the development of the university’s SLO, and employed the ideal methodology to achieve its results. Participants in the focus groups attested to the importance of the university owning its core identity and affiliations, while qualifying that

“...LLU was more driven by a Christ-like service orientation than by a religious 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.” (p. 29, 2008 CPR Report)

In response to the research project, the university's administration has revised the SLO:

Outcome 2: Students understand the importance of integrating LLU's Christ-centered values in their personal and professional lives. (p. 3, 2008 CPR Report)

As the SLOs constitute measurable outcomes that support the university's goal for mission-focused learning, this institutional study informed the campus's planning processes with "appropriately defined and analyzed... qualitative data" Further, the study continues to align the university's need for relevant measures of its success with its institutional priorities, by focusing on the campus's identity and mission when defining the formal language of its learning outcomes. The considerable participation of faculty in this research project -- in both the project's inspiration, via their various interpretations of the SLO's terminology, and its data collection process as focus group participants -- qualifies as "significant faculty involvement... in ongoing inquiry into... the conditions and practices that promote the kinds and levels of learning intended by the institution". The quality and scope of this project support LLU's research theme of Bible-based faith, and both the institutional process that initiated the work and the research itself should be commended as exemplifying multiple criteria for review articulated by WASC Standard 4. It is critical to consider whether comparable institutions to LLU would enlist faculty into service as institutional researchers with this service potentially disrupting their scholarship and teaching responsibilities to the institution, instead of the institution implementing such studies by way of an appropriately staffed institutional research office. (CFR 4.2, 4.3, 4.7).

In response to another of WASC's 1999 recommendations, LLU developed and has regularly administered a significant institutional research project in the form of a survey instrument that assesses its mission-focused student learning outcome that relates to Wholeness (Outcome 1). The Wholeness Inventory and its reports have contributed relevant information to the administration regarding its successes and areas of



improvement for this outcome, and the data have provided the institution's management with a basis for programmatic enhancements. (CFR 4.6)

Such success, however, should not compromise the critical review of institutional research at the university that is described in the LLU Assessment Plan. A comprehensive institutional research agenda must be formally established and supported with the resources it requires to succeed. The visiting team recommends such a reconsideration of the scope and value of institutional research at the university and how best to foster these efforts, in light of LLU's stated priority to develop into a learning organization and to engage, for perhaps the first time centrally, in research-based decision making. If the institution clearly desires, in many ways, to "create infrastructures that strengthen central services" (p. 4, LLU 2008 CPR Report), an effort to gain capacity in its institutional research operation is warranted. (CFR 4.5)

### **Commendations**

1. The University is commended for highlighting for the mission and faith-based culture throughout all its activities.
2. The University Leadership is to be commended for its openness and sincere desire in seeking input from the University community.
3. The University's commitment to service is a model for the nation.
4. Faculty and deans of schools are to be commended for encouraging student leadership, including their involvement in academic review process.
5. The University is to be commended for a strong commitment to the WASC process.
6. The University's Wholeness Portal will serve as an exemplar for peer institutions of a tool that promotes both student learning outcome attainment and assessment.

7. The University is to be commended for its implementation of educational technologies to provide effective content delivery for on-campus as well as global programs.

### **Recommendations**

1. LLU has done a good preliminary process in preparing for the educational effectiveness review, but must continue efforts to demonstrate a culture of the evidence-based educational effectiveness process. Most important for the educational effectiveness review would be evidence of selected key programs having completed one or more cycles of outcomes measurement, analysis and response. The CPR team suggests a strategic and phased approach in further implementation efforts. In addition, a demonstration of a generalized increased understanding of outcome based analysis, by producing measurable outcomes for programs, would be more productive than attempting to produce advanced documentation for all programs. It might be helpful to hire or establish a consultative relationship with a higher education professional that would help in the creation of measurable outcomes, disseminating that knowledge throughout the University leadership and helping the programs engage in educational effectiveness reviews. (CFR 4.3, 4.4)

2. The CPR team endorses the collaboration and interdependency of the functional parts of the university. There is a unique opportunity to make all parts of the university come together with an integrated and strategic vision. Loma Linda has a long tradition of strong schools with a strong medical center. Strengthening the central university structure, by continuing to develop the strategic planning process, will help the institution advance its long term goals. (1.3, 4.4)

3. The central university structure needs to be further strengthened and developed, in order to provide support for faculty, staff and students, specifically in areas of institutional research, information systems, financial aid, student finance, registration and records. The University leadership should facilitate opportunities for interdisciplinary and inter-programmatic collaboration and communication. (3.5)