

**A FULL-SCALE  
EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**

**APRIL 23-25, 2007**

**A CONFIDENTIAL REPORT PREPARED FOR THE  
NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
THAT REPRESENTS THE VIEWS OF THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

Evaluation Committee Report  
Seattle Pacific University  
Seattle, Washington  
April 23-25, 2007

Table of Contents

Evaluation Committee	3
Introduction	4
Standard One – Institutional Mission and Goal	5
Standard Two – Educational Program and Its Effectiveness	7
Policies for Standard Two	11
Standard Three – Students	13
Policy 3.1	17
Standard Four – Faculty	17
Policy 4.1	18
Standard Five – Library and Information Resources	19
Standard Six - Governance	23
Standard Seven – Finance	25
Standard Eight – Physical Resources	28
Standard Nine – Institutional Integrity	30
General Commendations and Recommendations	31

## EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Vivian A. Bull, Chair  
President Emerita  
Linfield College  
54 Prospect St.  
Madison, NJ

Dr. Willard M. Kniep  
Provost and Vice President  
for Academic Affairs  
Pacific University  
Forest Grove, OR

Mr. Douglas G. Belliston  
University Controller  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah

Dr. Deborah L. Loers  
Dean of Student Development  
Willamette University  
Salem, OR

Dr. Mary Jane Chase  
Dean, School of Arts  
& Sciences  
Westminster College  
Salt Lake City, UT

Dr. David R. Odiorne  
Provost and Vice President  
for Academic Affairs  
National College of Natural  
Medicine  
Portland, OR

Dr. Lee E. Golden  
Associate Professor of Education  
(Retired)  
University of Portland  
Portland, OR

Dr. Harold J. Schleef  
Associate Professor of Economics/  
Director of Assessment  
Lewis and Clark College  
Portland, OR

Ms. Nancy B. Hoover  
University Librarian  
Marylhurst University  
Marylhurst, OR

Dr. Sandra Elman, *Ex officio*  
President  
Northwest Commission on  
Colleges and Universities  
Redmond WA

## **INTRODUCTION**

What is now Seattle Pacific University was founded in 1891 by the Free Methodist Church to be a school in Seattle where students would be educated and trained for missionary service by teachers whose lives represented the highest in Christian values. It developed over the years so that in celebration of its first 100 years, Seattle Pacific University (SPU) had grown into a premier Christian university of arts, sciences and professional studies.

In 2000, the University had put into effect a Comprehensive Plan for the 21st Century. The plan brought together planning streams for education, enrollment, endowment and facilities to ensure Seattle Pacific's future success. As elements of this plan were achieved, a University wide planning process produced a continuing plan 2014: A Blueprint for Excellence. The community is fully committed to the Mission Statement and to the continuing plan.

SPU offers 56 undergraduate majors, 11 master's degree programs and three doctoral programs. The University remains committed to graduating students who demonstrate both academic competence and personal character, graduates who will change the world.

## **EVALUATION OF THE SELF-STUDY**

The self-study was well prepared and presented in a most usable version. The accompanying CD allowed the readers to access information easily, as well as reviewing some of the documentation available. The listings of the committees showed wide participation in both the steering committee as well as those writing on the Standards. The various listings of participants, however, did not indicate any participation of the trustees or the students, with the exception of Bethany Krumm, President of the Associated Students of Seattle Pacific.

The Review Committee found the Self-Study to be accurate and adequate in the discussions of the University. There was some unevenness in the presentations, but that gave evidence of a participatory experience. The concern was that the study had less analysis than expected. Also, though the planning was well discussed, there was less evidence that assessment, though reported well, had informed the planning. In discussions during the visit, the Review Committee found that assessment had been informing planning, and evidence was provided to confirm this. There could have been more data to meet some preferences, and data presented graphically over time would have been helpful in some of the presentations.

The Committee wishes to express appreciation to all those who contributed to the Self-Study and to the visit. Our various needs were always met and the hospitality shown by the SPU community was outstanding. Our special appreciation goes to President Eaton, to Doctors Les Steele and Cynthia Price, co-chairs of the Steering Committee, and to Megan Swanson for the special care and concern for the total project and for the visiting Committee. Thanks also to all the faculty, students, staff and Trustees who were so accommodating of the many needs and concerns of the visiting Committee. We appreciated the hospitality and the open and informed discussions we shared during our visit to Seattle Pacific University. We found a community that is working well and is fully committed to a common mission and vision for the University.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

SPU meets all of the NWCCU Eligibility Requirements for accreditation. Recommendations and concerns of the Evaluation Committee are stated below and in the discussion of individual standards and policies.

### **STANDARD ONE – INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND GOALS, PLANNING AND EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **Standard 1.A – Mission and Goals**

“Seattle Pacific University seeks to be a premier Christian University fully committed to engaging the culture and changing the world by graduating people of competence and character, becoming people of wisdom, and modeling grace-filled community.”

The mission statement and goals clearly define Seattle Pacific University. Each group and many individuals with whom we spoke would at some point in the conversation reference the mission statement. It is fully accepted and defines the work and life at SPU.

There has been a great deal of planning over the last decade. Shortly after the arrival of President Philip Eaton in 1996, he began a “grand conversation” across the campus with two questions: who are we and what do we want to become? This resulted in The Comprehensive Plan for the 21st Century (CP21), articulating a vision for engaging the culture and changing the world.

A new mission statement was adopted in 2002 (see above). The community is much aware of the mission statement, it appears in publications and is posted in many offices. The community has truly embodied the commitment as stated in the Mission. A new Statement of Faith articulated with clarity the institution’s identity as a Christian University. This too is widely available in publications, on the Website, on employment materials and in Board materials.

As the University was completing many of the parts of the CP21 plan, it was time for a second planning process. In 2004, the President began a process of discussion and deliberation about the next phase of the University. This resulted in the next plan: 2014: A Blueprint for Excellence with the goals of becoming not only a premier but also a national Christian university. This plan includes 10-year goals and 15 breakout strategies, a resource strategy with strategic investments to achieve the plan, and a dashboard of strategic economic indicators to measure progress and success. The Board fully endorsed the new plan. There is a wide acceptance of the goals and activities in evidence relating to the Blueprint.

The vision for cultural engagement is a part of both the classroom and extra-curricular activities. The community is focused outwardly, seeking to make the world a better place. All parts of the community are involved and there are various graphic presentations widely distributed about campus reminding all of the many aspects of the mission and plan. There are a large number of activities involving SPU in many aspects of community service.

SPU is fully aware and regularly has reported significant and substantive changes in mission and program to the Commission. This has been true in recent years particularly with the development of new programs at the graduate level.

#### Standard 1.B - Planning and Effectiveness

There is truly a culture of planning at Seattle Pacific University. Led by the President upon his arrival, the institution has done much planning as well as much assessment. One must always be cautious not to have so many different types of assessment, that assessment becomes the focus, rather than being the input, which is important for good planning. Discussions indicate that assessment does inform planning, and the community is aware and supportive of the process.

When new programs are proposed, the focus is always upon how new programs or projects further the mission of the University. Each new proposal must also include an assessment plan that spells out intended outcomes and processes for assessing the outcomes.

Though the self-study reports “that the planning process involved the participation of all segments of the campus community,” our discussions found that various constituencies were concerned about greater participation in the planning and budgeting process, and/or participation at an earlier stage of discussions. We found that there are several budget committees, but they do not meet together. That when planning takes place, one group would discuss the ideas, their information would be carried forward by a dean or department head, then the information would move on up to the final deliberative body. Participatory governance would indicate that discussions should be carried out in a horizontal manner, across the community, rather than in a vertical structure. People from many parts of the University would be in discussion about similar problems and the inter-relationships of the members in discussion might lead to a more universal understanding of the issues and a more inclusive process and outcome, as well as creating a learning experience for all participants about life and work in a community of decision-makers.

There is great support in the outcomes of the planning, which has been undertaken, but only a few people are in on the final stages, sometimes with little feedback to the “lower” planning groups. Interactive planning can be a great learning experience and this has not been consistently fulfilled for the community.

In 2003 the Office of Information and Data Management was created to develop information and data management functions to assist and support the planning processes across the University. This allows for common data and information to be readily available from a single source whose work cuts across the total institution. There are a large number of different activities of data gathering across the University, several of which are from outside sources (i.e., Collegiate Learning Assessment, Faculty Survey of Student Experience, Cooperative Institutional Research Project and the College Student Survey and the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute Faculty Survey, among others). All academic programs are subject to regular review, the design of which will correspond to NWCCU standards beginning in this year. Henceforth they will also include more quantitative analysis. Necessary resources to support effective academic planning and evaluation are available through the budget from the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Office of Information and Data Management provides timely data and analysis for offices throughout the University. These data can assist in setting priorities for action. This information is used for planning and evaluation processes and is communicated to both internal and external constituencies, as appropriate.

## **STANDARD TWO – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

Seattle Pacific University has set for itself an ambitious goal of becoming “a premier Christian University fully committed to engaging the culture and changing the world”. To that end the university has engaged in a comprehensive review and revision of its educational programs to address a set of educational goals outlined in its “Undergraduate Degree Program Learning Outcomes.” The Committee visited Seattle Pacific in the middle of this process.

Undergraduate departments and programs are adapting their learning outcomes to meet new standards. Assessment measures have been and are being adapted to address these new learning outcomes. Next steps in curricular revision are in the initial action phase. In short, the Committee found a curriculum with a commendable assessment plan that is undertaking a major new transformation. This transformation is rooted in the culture and mission of the institution, articulating existing values and putting substance and intentionality into an already strong curriculum.

### **Standard 2.A – General Requirements**

Undergraduate majors have identified learning outcomes; most departments have designed their program and strategies to enable students to achieve those outcomes. Graduate programs are often competency based and program design is aimed at achieving those competencies.

Graduate programs have not always given full consideration to the scheduling needs of the students they serve. For example, in the School of Education classes are scheduled in the late afternoon or evening during the academic year which accommodates the schedule of working adults very well. However, during the summer months classes for these same students are offered during the morning and early afternoon causing a hardship for some students who are employed in nine-to-five jobs. In addition, other support services (e.g. Computer and Information Systems services) are unavailable during the hours when many graduate classes meet.

#### Standard 2.B – Educational Program Planning and Assessment

Annual program assessments are available for all of the University's degree programs and indicate both the collection of pertinent data and the closing of the loop with respect to actions taken by educational programs to improve quality and address problems. The quality of data varies from program to program. A wide variety of tools are used, including surveys, portfolios, exit interviews, written feedback, testing such as ETS discipline specific tests, and benchmarking surveys. Also there is no consistent place where program learning outcomes are published. While many programs publish this information on their web site, this is not universally true and is sometimes difficult to identify. While curriculum maps identify the courses where program learning outcomes will be addressed, individual course objectives are frequently vague and stated in ways that are difficult to measure.

Program goals are strongly supportive of institutional mission and goals, reflecting significant attention to critical thinking, communication skills, and problem solving integrated with content.

One commonly expressed concern was the need for greater opportunities for cross-disciplinary and cross-school communication. While serendipitous conversations occur, structures and venues for more broad-ranging and/or deeper conversations seem to be lacking. These conversations will be particularly important in the continuation of the General Education revamp, but would be of benefit to all academic programs.

#### Standards 2.C and 2.D – Undergraduate Program and Graduate Program

Seattle Pacific University has sufficient human, physical, and financial resources to adequately support the educational programs and is responsive to changing needs in these areas. A 60,000 square foot building was added for biology and chemistry in 2003. Other facilities including Otto Miller Hall have seen recent renovations, providing state-of-the art learning spaces.

Undergraduate program goals are strongly supportive of institutional mission and goals and are congruent with the institutional Undergraduate Degree Program Learning Outcomes, reflecting coherent program design.

Programs in School of Business and Economics, School of Psychology, Family and Community, and Education follow guidelines established by outside professional accrediting agencies such as AACSB, APA, and NCATE. It is clear that these departments and programs,

both undergraduate and graduate, benefit from the program guidelines of their accrediting bodies. All of these programs demonstrate good curricular coherence and effective assessment of learning outcomes.

Enrollment pressures in some programs such as Family and Consumer Science (FCS) have created challenges in terms of faculty and physical resources. FCS faces challenges in offering competitive salaries—especially in the area of dietetics. Also, the food science laboratory facility is inadequate and out of date, given it was last updated in the 1970s.

Although significant attention has been given to the development of educational objectives at both the course and program level, additional work is needed, as these are not always clearly defined.

At the departmental level, faculty have a major role and responsibility in design, integrity, implementation, and assessment of the curriculum. They are responsive to changing student needs and demographics, designing new courses, majors, and pathways as demand changes. These proposals are vetted through well established and effective processes prior to implementation.

Expected learning outcomes have been identified for all programs and appropriate processes are in place to demonstrate achievement of published outcomes. Periodic program reviews assess all aspects of content and delivery resulting in continuous efforts to improve courses and programs.

The Master of Science in Nursing program has recently been revised in response to recommendations from students and to keep pace with the standards of various professional associations. Program administrators report these changes appear to be effective and comprehensive assessment will be undertaken in the next academic year. A donor has provided resources which will be used to create an advanced simulation lab for the School of Health Sciences. This is currently in the design stages and faculty are heavily involved in this process.

Required admissions, transfer, academic, and other academic policies for graduate programs in the School of Health Sciences are in place and available in the Graduate Catalog and on line. Clear and consistent policies regarding transfer of credit are followed and the University does not grant credit for experiential learning which occurred prior to matriculation.

School of Business and Economics (SBE) graduates the largest number of majors of any program – 105 in 2006. SBE offers high quality undergraduate programs with majors in Accounting, Business Administration, and Information Systems Management. In addition, the MBA and MS in Information Systems Management are offered with 35 to 40 graduates per year. Both undergraduate and graduate programs are fully accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Compliance with AACSB standards equals or exceeds NWCCU Standard 2 areas such as curricular coherence, adequate resources, and library/information resources. Moreover, a variety of good assessment tools are used including exit interviews, ETS area tests, and EBI benchmarking. SBE currently offers cohort graduate

programs at Boeing. The Boeing program has not been as successful as anticipated and will likely be phased out within two to three years.

The level of expectations for the doctoral program in Education is clearly differentiated from the master's and baccalaureate levels. Approximately one-third of the courses required for the doctoral program are for doctoral students only. In addition, the School of Education has limited the faculty who teach and advise in the doctoral program to those who have a demonstrated and consistent record of advanced scholarship and research in their field.

#### Standard 2.G – Continuing Education and Special Learning Activities

The 1997 Ten Year Review recommended that the University develop strategies and allocate resources to make more explicit the connection between its graduate programs and the Division of Continuing Studies and the institution's mission and values. After a thorough assessment the University decentralized continuing education realigning programs within academic units. As a result of this realignment, several programs and offerings have been phased out. Those remaining are being effectively managed by the academic units.

Off campus program activity is designed, approved, administered, and evaluated under established institutional procedures and full-time faculty are appropriately involved in the planning and approval of all continuing education, special learning courses, and other program activity.

The audience being served, (off-campus professionals who serve in agencies, schools, corporations, and other organizations) is consistent with the University's mission statement. The full responsibility for administering continuing education is clearly defined and an integral organizational component of the institution's organization. The regular faculty are responsible for the academic design, review and assessment of all offerings. In the case of the MBA taught at Boeing's Everett site, the program is the same as the on-campus program and courses are taught by regular faculty who go to the teaching site at Boeing.

The majority of the University's continuing education program is housed within the School of Education. All credit courses are reviewed and evaluated by regular faculty. Degree programs are reviewed and approved in the same manner as on-campus degree programs. Policies governing transfer credit are the same as for on-campus programs.

The Master of Education degree offered on-line is the same program that is offered on campus. The tutorial and staff support provided for faculty and students involved with this program is commendable. Students are well satisfied with the education they are receiving.

The operational and fiscal elements of all programs are managed by a full time staff headed by a Director of Continuing Education. Remarks from adjunct faculty and students praised the clarity of policies and the knowledge and professionalism of the support staff that were always responsive to their questions and needs.

#### Standard 2.H – Non-credit Programs and Courses

Non-credit courses, programs, and courses that award Continuing Educational Units (CEUs) are reviewed and approved by regular faculty. The institution follows national guidelines for awarding such units.

In addition to the superb support to adjunct faculty and students, the School has established meaningful relationships and partnerships with K-12 schools, school districts, and Educational Service Districts. Partnerships with over 30 school districts support teachers' ongoing professional development. Partnerships with Educational Service Districts provide course work to support completion of endorsements in critical high need areas such as math, science, and special education. The Director of Continuing Education is one of two higher education members on the Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction's Curriculum Advisory Review Committee.

The Committee commends the School of Education's integration of continuing education within the entire unit and for its highly visible leadership in the community which reflects positively on Seattle Pacific University.

#### Policy 2.1 - General Education/Related Instruction Requirements

The general education program at Seattle Pacific University consists of three parts: 1) the competencies in mathematics, English, and foreign languages; 2) the Common Curriculum (including University Foundation courses and the University Core courses); and 3) the Exploratory Curriculum. Incoming students also participate in a cohort model in a University Seminar taught by faculty who serve as academic advisors during the first year. The Common Curriculum has the greatest obvious congruence with the "Undergraduate Degree Program Learning Outcomes." Its continuing development has been guided by that document, even though its original development precedes the adoption of the Learning Outcomes in May 2005. With this process complete, the institution is poised to undertake a revision of the competencies and Exploratory Curriculum. Issues have been identified and faculty members are anticipating the opportunity to have a broad and comprehensive discussion of the program based on the Undergraduate Degree Program Learning Outcomes.

Concerns expressed by students regarding the variation in quality and standards in the 1000 level Common Curriculum courses are acknowledged by the faculty and administration. One of the repeated concerns is the need for structure to facilitate cross-disciplinary discussions of the Common and Exploratory Curricula. It is acknowledged that there is limited coordination between the Foundation and Core courses in the Common Curriculum and no coordination between the Common and Exploratory Curricula. While the General Education sub-committee of UPEC and some individual faculty can articulate the intention and design behind the two-tiered curriculum, almost everyone expressed a desire for a broader conversation.

Seattle Pacific's general education requirement clearly meets the requirements of Policy 2.1 on General Education. As it heads into the next phase of development, the curriculum has the potential to become a national model of developmentally based general education. The Committee looks forward to seeing the next iteration.

## Policy 2.2 - Educational Assessment

The University has accelerated its work on assessment and has made impressive progress since the focused visit on this topic in 2002. Evidence of this progress includes creation of a position in the Office of Academic Affairs to provide leadership and coordination of assessment activities, completion of a process that resulted in the adoption by the faculty of learning outcomes for all undergraduates, development in each department of student outcomes and assessment plans, and revision of the definition and delivery methods of capstone courses within the undergraduate programs.

Within the professionally oriented programs – most graduate, some undergraduate – assessment activities have been driven by the standards of specialized accrediting agencies. Several of the graduate programs are participating in external benchmarking studies to assess the learning outcomes of their students against those of other institutions. It appears to be quite common for the graduate programs to apply their assessment of student outcomes to program revisions and improvement.

The impetus for creating a culture of assessment has clearly come from the Office of Academic Affairs. This office has regularly sponsored workshops and consultations focused on strategies for assessing outcomes and has instituted an annual “in-service” day at the end of the Spring term at which time departments meet to review their assessment results and to prepare their plans for the following year. It appears that all departments prepare annual assessment reports and also participate in departmental reviews every five years.

At the outset of the assessment initiative, the Office of Academic Affairs developed a plan and timeline and continues to promulgate outlines and guidelines for departments and Schools to follow in completing their assessment plans and reports. Most benchmarks in that plan have now been met and it is probably time for the university to consider the next stage in assessment and to publish and disseminate a plan to guide individuals, departments, and schools through that next stage. As they do so, they are encouraged to develop strategies for assessing the undergraduate learning outcomes and to clearly spell out the expectations and responsibilities of the various units engaged in the assessment enterprise. In addition, the Office of Academic Affairs may wish to develop strategies and structures that will foster greater ownership, leadership and accountability for assessment efforts among the Deans and faculty within the Schools and Colleges.

## Policy 2.4 - Study Abroad Programs

The University’s study abroad offerings have evolved over time. In its Self Study, the University described the study abroad programs as “numerous and varied” and noted that “there is little structure overseeing the entire study abroad program and curriculum.” Although the University began a review of these programs in 2006, the Self Study notes that the review will not be completed until the end of the 2007-2008 academic year.

The committee reviewed notes of meetings regarding the review of these programs. Based on this review, the committee finds little evidence that students are currently receiving adequate information and counseling regarding how to ensure that courses taken abroad fulfill graduation requirements at SPU.

The University does not have a staff person or office to manage and oversee this program. As a result, students cannot readily obtain information on programs available and are not receiving timely advice and academic counseling on these programs in light of their individual graduation requirements.

The University must ensure that there are clearly defined criteria and policies for each program, that students receive information in a timely manner, and that the programs be accurately represented in the University's catalog and all promotional materials.

#### Policy 2.6 - Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificate and Degree Programs

The University has a strong bias toward face-to-face courses in its undergraduate programs but does utilize a web-based learning management system as a venue for providing electronic documents in about eighty percent of its courses. Although there are a few blended courses and some isolated examples of on-line offerings in the undergraduate programs, the bulk of distance learning is to be found in the very robust continuing and post-graduate education offerings of the School of Education.

The large number of course offerings are supported by an impressive constellation of resources available to faculty both for course creation and developing competence in the pedagogy of electronic delivery. Courses are regularly reviewed to insure quality and faculty are mentored in upgrading any identified weaknesses. Students are similarly supported in developing the skills necessary to fully benefit from these learning opportunities and course evaluations indicate a high degree of success in this endeavor.

#### Policy A-6 Contractual Relationships with Organizations Not Regionally Accredited

The University has no courses offered under contract with organizations not accredited.

### **STANDARD THREE - STUDENTS**

#### Standard 3.A – Purpose and Organization

Student services provided by Seattle Pacific University match the mission and goals of the institution. Essential services are provided and the emphasis on spiritual and moral growth are compatible with the stated mission and goals in the Blueprint for Excellence.

Staff are professionally trained, work in a collegial manner and appear to fully understand and embrace a well-developed personal and spiritual development program for students. While

there is attention needed to staffing, housing and space in selected areas, overall the students' needs are met. Procedures and policies could be reviewed to better describe current operating guidelines, but the program delivery appears to be sound and consistent, based on a continuity of staff committed to the institution. The growing graduate programs will need attention to ensure that students are adequately served in selected areas

### Standard 3.B –General Responsibilities

There are a variety of services that support student academic success, including a strong academic advising program that includes drop-in advising, faculty advising and first year student advising. The Learning Center provides tutoring and a range of learning services. Disabilities services are provided by a part-time staff member in the Learning Center: the institution will likely need to review staffing in order to manage future demand for academic accommodations. There are some physical access issues on campus, such as access to the Graduate Admissions Office. The institution should consider a review of campus accessibility and develop a plan for systematically addressing these issues.

Students are actively involved in shaping campus culture, with the opportunity to develop extracurricular programs and participate in various campus committees. Likewise, with the reorganization of Student Services under the Academic Affairs umbrella, there is a stronger collaboration with faculty and a mutual interest in developing co-curricular programs that clearly complement academic goals.

Policies on undergraduate student conduct are published in the student handbook, on the web, and at admission, to help communicate the expectations of the institution to students. Orientation leaders, campus ministry and Residence Life student staff discuss these expectations with all students in the residence halls early in the semester. Students are cognizant of campus security resources, including a student escort service, and generally feel the campus is a safe and comfortable learning environment.

The institution uses standard assessment instruments, such as the NSSE, but departments vary in their use of the available data and many do limited evaluation of the effectiveness of their services. Residence Life and the Student Activities programs provide clear examples of evaluating programs and tailoring programs to meet the Lifestyle Expectations and student development goals as indicated in the Student Life Blueprint. The Learning Center also has a strong evaluation component and is able to clearly show services provided and evaluate effectiveness. However, institutional assessment capability is somewhat limited in opportunities for staff to access and utilize survey data and receive consultation on assessment.

### Standard 3.C – Academic Credit and Records

The Registrar's Office makes all decisions on the awarding of credit based on criteria developed by faculty. Over the last ten years, significant improvements have been made to improve the evaluation of transfer credits, to provide automated, on-line degree audits, and to create an on-line credit equivalency guide. The staff note that increased numbers of students come with

credits from other institutions and they expect this trend to continue. With the faculty, the Registrar has established articulation agreements with regional and national college consortiums and is in the process of creating these with local community colleges. The Office of the Registrar is to be commended for this effort to continually update the credit equivalency review and respond to the trends.

The Registrar, formerly the associate registrar, has strong working relations with Admissions and Financial Aid staff and also sits on a number of faculty committees, including retention, undergraduate policies, and she is regularly invited to the Deans' Cabinet. These assignments contribute to a collaboration of effort that result in identifying problems and suggesting remedies, and considering the effects of proposed remedies on the Registrar, Financial Aid and Admissions Offices.

A current challenge is the awarding of credit for study abroad programs. Increased student interest in the programs has resulted in questions about which programs should be approved and for how many credits. Students should be properly advised as to the transferability of credits before going abroad.

Concern: University faculty, Office of the Registrar and Academic Administration should develop a plan to coordinate evaluation of study abroad programs and designate a faculty or administrator to manage this growing interest among students. It is important that study abroad program goals and the awarding of credit for programs be clearly described and consistent.

### Standard 3.D – Student Services

The institution has clearly stated admission goals and standards and seeks to adhere to these guidelines. By developing community partnerships and the creation of the Perkins Center, the University is working consistently and creatively to fulfill its mission and goals related to diversity. However, as the student body becomes more geographically, ethnically, racially and educationally diverse, the University will likely require greater support services to retain these students. In particular, specialty services such as Counseling, Disability and Learning services continue to experience heavy usage and the institution will need to periodically assess the staffing to ensure that a diverse student body can be retained. Even students with higher entering G.P.A.s and test scores, adjusting to college learning, seek out these services and expect that there will be reasonable access.

The Center for Learning program is well grounded in learning theory and the staff and student tutors are highly committed to excellent service. Student tutors experience a sense of calling through this work: one student this year has been accepted to AmeriCorps, and credits her job as a tutor and mentoring from the staff as a significant factor in her vocational development. The national increase in disability services demand and the stated Blueprint goal of reaching out to diverse student populations suggest that maintaining and possibly increasing Learning Center staff will be needed to meet the mission and goals of the University and the expectations of the student population.

The current Director has creatively adapted to the limit of budget and staff expertise.

Communication with students regarding graduation and program requirements appears to be adequate and even commendable with use of faculty, advisors in the Registrar's office, and first year student advising. There is print and web availability of requirements as well. However, because study abroad programs are offered across departments, without any central coordination, it is difficult for students, faculty and staff to reliably obtain or convey credit transfer information needed for graduation. Student interest in these programs, as encouraged by the University's mission to engage the world, will require careful review and coordination across departments.

Career services are well-developed at the undergraduate level; this office also serves some graduate students but only for resume and limited interview coaching. As the graduate programs develop, it will be important to assess the students' career services and placement needs, and consider where these services should be offered.

Financial aid is provided to students in line with the priorities of the University mission. Default rate is low and aid is distributed according to standard set of criteria. Information about aid and financial responsibility are made available to students in a variety of formats. A recent large donation has substantially furthered the goal of providing aid to underrepresented groups. While financial aid is carefully managed on an annual basis to meet discount rate and enrollment goals, the University will need to develop financial aid resources if the goals are to continue to be met in the future.

First year student orientation occurs at the undergraduate level, in a way that is consistent with the goals of the University. However, the orientation for graduate students varies according to the school. There is a concern that graduate students do not receive adequate information regarding services available to them, such as health services, student insurance, financial aid, code of conduct. An effort should be made to ensure that these students receive full orientation information about university services. These students may increasingly use and expect services, particularly with the growth of full-time programs, full-time graduate students and the younger age of some graduate students, i.e., marriage and family program, clinical psychology program and the doctoral industrial psychology program.

Health and counseling services are provided to undergraduate students by a well-trained and dedicated staff. Strategic changes have been made to decrease a counseling waiting list that essentially made services unavailable to most students requesting services. However, an unacceptable wait list situation still exists. In the health service, a student serves as medical receptionist, leading to potential compromises of HIPPA laws and at best, dual relationship issues that can compromise care.

Housing and food services are offered and meet the needs of the students. There are a variety of food and housing venues. Food venues are more limited on weekends, when many graduate students are on campus. Efforts have been made to address these needs. Students raised concerns about the condition of older homes purchased by the University and rented to students. These living conditions have been evaluated for health and safety issues by staff.

Co-curricular programs are developed with the mission statement and student development goals in mind. There is an exceptional awareness among staff of the mission of the University with respect to spiritual formation and character development. Recently, a much needed space for commuter students has been developed.

**Concern:**

Specialty services for graduate students are limited. As the number of full-time graduate students increase, counseling and disability services will need to be expanded to meet their needs. Strong consideration needs to be given to providing a greater level of on-campus services, since there is already an unacceptable wait list situation. Currently, the Learning Center and Counseling Services are experiencing strong demand and should be supported in line with the University's mission and student needs. These services have strong credibility with students, faculty and staff: they are viewed by many constituent groups as essential to the success of many students

**Standard 3.E – Intercollegiate Athletics**

The Intercollegiate Athletic program meets standards in providing an athletic program with strong financial oversight, focus on academic success of students and concern for gender equity issues. There is a positive relationship with other student service programs, and athletes use health, counseling, and learning services. Good documentation of eligibility exists and staff are attentive to student needs. The program is highly successful athletically, while also supporting students' academic success and graduating students at a high rate.

**Policy 3.1 Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status**

The University meets criteria for integrity and responsibility in advertising, recruitment and principles of good practice. It appears that published materials are accurate and include required elements of institutional and program description in all areas, except for the publication of rules and regulations for conduct. The graduate student catalog, as published on the University's web site, does not include the University's conduct code, grievance procedures or students' rights and responsibilities.

The committee notes that in identifying the accrediting agencies in published materials, the address of the Northwest Commission is repeatedly omitted.

**STANDARD FOUR – FACULTY**

**Standard 4.A – Faculty Selection, Evaluation, Welfare, and Development**

Seattle Pacific University employs a stable and well-qualified cadre of faculty with a primary commitment to the University. Although one department chair noted that salaries are generally perceived to be “below market,” this has not compromised the University’s ability to attract and retain dedicated individuals with a commitment to the mission.

As detailed in the Constitution and By-laws of the faculty, faculty participate in planning, assessment, and governance primarily through the Faculty Senate, Faculty Council and service on standing committees such as the Undergraduate Policies and Evaluation Committee and the Graduate Policies and Evaluation Committee. Participation in curriculum development and review through schools and departments is encouraged. Although there is some indication that the level of participation may not be consistent, departmental reports indicate an effective process. Some faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences indicate that they do not have regular opportunities to provide input beyond the departmental level.

The full-time faculty workload is defined as thirty-nine credits for undergraduate faculty and twenty-seven credits at the graduate level. These loads include academic advising and committee work, but not professional development or research.

The University demonstrates a strong commitment to faculty development, providing such opportunities as a Teaching 101 workshop each quarter; a quarter-long New Faculty Seminar; and a number of other workshops and seminars. Each faculty member receives an annual professional development allocation, which was \$800 in 2005-06.

A well-defined and appropriate process for faculty recruitment and appointment is available on the web and institutional personnel policies and procedures are published in the *Faculty Handbook* and other easily available University documents.

The University’s policy on academic freedom is based on the broadly accepted principles articulated by the American Association of University Professors and is well and appropriately articulated in the context of the University’s mission.

#### Standard 4.B – Scholarship, Research and Artistic Creation

Faculty are encouraged and supported in scholarly activities. Despite the teaching focus of the university, many faculty are quite active in research and are often joined by their students. Exhibits demonstrate a high level of productivity. Over the past several years, expectations for faculty scholarship have increased and this is evident in the exhibits.

##### Policy 4.1 - Faculty Evaluation

Seattle Pacific has protocols and processes for faculty evaluation in the Faculty Manual and other documents. These protocols and processes, however, do not appear to be clear to the faculty in the way that they described them to the Committee. For example, some confusion seemed to exist regarding the way that merit increases are related to step increases. While it is understandable that individual faculty would not be entirely conversant with the faculty

processes, it was of greater concern that faculty chairs also seemed to provide a variety of answers on these procedures.

Most problematic was the acknowledgment that the current post-tenure review process was not systematically applied across the faculty. The Committee felt it was particularly problematic that current procedures require individual faculty members to initiate their own post-tenure reviews without oversight by committee or individual to ensure that all faculty are following the procedure. At least one faculty member reported never having a post tenure review during the past twenty years.

The institution has differentiated the workload for undergraduate and graduate faculty, and has developed a well considered process for recruitment of faculty which is readily available in the faculty handbook and posted on the university website. Recently the School of Theology has reviewed and updated its recruitment process and is planning to publish a paper on what they have learned as a result.

## **STANDARD FIVE – LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES**

### **Standard 5.A – Purpose and Scope**

The library is a much beloved institution on campus and this was evident in all conversations and meetings with faculty and students. All constituents have a high level of satisfaction with services offered by the library. Much has changed in the past two years with the hire of the current library director and in many ways the library is beginning a fresh start in areas critical to supporting teaching and learning on campus.

Unfortunately, one area has not significantly improved. The materials budget has fluctuated over the past 5 years from \$449,822 in 2001-02 to \$540,332 in 2005-06, reported in the Self-Study with an update. With the cost of materials rapidly increasing, adequate funding is necessary to support resources for the academic community. In some cases, the book budget was sacrificed in order to keep current with the increases in the costs of periodicals and electronic resources. Also, expenditures for electronic resources have declined.

There has been no allowance in the budget for an increase to cover inflation in the cost of periodicals and electronic resources. Budgets are essentially rolled over as is from year to year. Periodical subscriptions had to be cancelled in order to keep within the limited budget allotments. Efforts to transfer money between funds for monographs, periodicals and electronic resources in concert with faculty are a short term fix to a long-term problem.

SPU Library has made a concerted effort to analyze their collection by bringing in an outside consultant in 2006. Feedback from faculty and graduate students said the collection was inadequate to support their research areas. Not only is relevant material not being added to the collection but dated titles are not being culled. The collection assessment consultant agreed that information resources are both perceived to be and actually are inadequate to support

undergraduate programs and totally inadequate to support the variety of graduate students. For example, the average age of materials in computer science is 1991 and for nursing it is 1992.

SPU has recently rewritten their Collection Development Policy to align the goals of collection building with University learning outcomes and curriculum. In addition, a librarian was appointed to oversee collection development. This newly created position was the result of a reworking of existing responsibilities among current staff. Having one person overseeing the collection development effort has resulted in the library being more strategic about expenditures. Suggestions for materials are solicited from faculty and students and faculty are asked to review and cull outdated material from the collection.

Librarians have a liaison model for collection development and work closely in their subject areas with faculty and students to obtain the necessary materials to support curriculum. Selection of material is well thought out and researched for each area. Faculty are enthusiastic about the support they receive from their liaisons in both collection development and teaching information literacy and learning outcomes in their programs.

ITS has taken on an impressive range of responsibilities for technology assistance for faculty and students in online learning and e-portfolios. Other contributions include facilitating synchronous meetings, videotaping on campus events and streaming video so they can be seen by off campus constituents, online learning and Blackboard, assisting faculty in the creation of online classes and with technology in their courses on line or in face to face teaching, assistance with video and audio media projects and retrospectively creating digital archives of previously taped lectures and events.

When new programs are created, a campus wide impact statement that includes the library allows for additional funds to support the program for a 5-year period. After 5 years, the library must absorb this new program into their budget. For individual courses, there is no support for additional resources needed to support the curriculum. One example is the addition of an Art Historian with no additional budget for resources to support the teaching of the subject. What the impact statement does not address is the impact on human resources in the library. Supporting graduate students writing theses is much more labor intensive than supporting undergraduate writing assignments.

Distance education students and faculty have a dedicated liaison librarian to assist them and to advocate for resources. Electronic resources accessible from off campus support online classes. Electronic Document Delivery is available for sending articles; SPU, ILL or Summit books can be mailed to students willing to pay a fee for this service. Other options to receive monographic materials are to use consortium libraries throughout the state of Washington for picking up and dropping off materials.

#### Standard 5.B – Information Resources and Services

Most programs have a core collection to support curriculum but some are lacking and basic resources and key databases are needed. Many resources are dated. Some core departments are missing basic electronic resources to support their curriculum.

There is equipment on site for viewing or listening to materials. Students are able to create video and audio digital projects with assistance from ITS staff. Unfortunately, students are not able to browse the media. Access is available through the catalog and items can be requested by students for use. Faculty are able to browse the media collection. This lack of access prohibits use of a valuable resource.

Instruction in information literacy is delivered face to face or via Blackboard, the course management system used by SPU. The liaison model is in effect for information literacy; librarians work with faculty and students in their designated subject areas to integrate skills at appropriate points and levels of the curriculum. Laudable efforts are being made to assess student-learning needs.

Pre- and post-tests were given to freshmen in the University Seminar in the fall of 2003 and there was much improvement in the results when students took the test at the end of the class. Based on student responses, changes to class content were made before it was taught again in fall 2004. Students said library integration in the University Seminar depended on the interest level of the teacher and not everyone's experience was informative.

The library obtains input from their users in a variety of ways including formal online surveys, instructional session evaluations or informal person-to-person contacts. A suggestion box in the library went unfilled for a year and was dropped. Students have no opportunity for ongoing input into planning. Faculty, however, have many opportunities to give their feedback in the form of surveys and intentional responses on the content of resources and budget.

Policies, regulations and procedures for the management and use of information resources are available on the web including circulation, classroom, copyright, reserves and emergency closures.

#### Standard 5.C – Facilities and Access

Annual building usage statistics indicate a very flat usage record over several years. Building use seems to be cyclical around midterms and finals. Computer usage is in high demand and at peak times when there are not enough computers to satisfy demand.

The library is open 90.5 hours per week and additional hours are added at the end of each quarter to meet the needs of students completing their class work and preparing for finals. Online resources are available from anywhere on campus or off campus. Students complain about the 11 pm closing time. Students study late and expect the library to be open to accommodate their study schedules.

The Library became a member of the Orbis Cascade Alliance in 2003 and patrons are able to initiate requests for monographs that arrive in 2-3 days. Faculty and students alike are thrilled with the Summit service and the access it affords them to the collections of major research libraries in Oregon and Washington. In addition, the library is a member of the Puget Sound Academic and Independent Libraries (PSAIL) and, although not included in the self-study, the

Northwest Association of Private Colleges and Universities (NAPCU) which have on site reciprocal borrowing privileges for students. ITS has cooperative arrangements with many organizations in support of multimedia resources, online learning and technology.

Disabled access is available through the main doors or side door of the library. There is one computer dedicated for assistive technology with software for visual disabilities. All computers on campus are replaced on a 3-year cycle. All classrooms are equipped with acceptable levels of equipment like projectors, computers and DVD players.

#### Standard 5.D – Personnel and Management

The library and ITS have a dedicated hard-working qualified staff. Recently, there has been some reshuffling of job responsibilities and departments to better utilize the strengths of the existing staff and to better meet the needs of constituents. The last couple of years has seen a welcome stability in the library staff.

The University evaluates faculty librarians once after 3 years of employment and annually goal setting and evaluation sessions are held with the head librarian. The policy that distinguishes between different types of librarians and the implications are a mystery to all. During the annual evaluations, goals are set and priorities are reviewed. The new librarian reports that all librarians and non-librarian staff will be evaluated annually, as well as during informal meetings during the course of the year. These procedures were put into place during the last two years.

There are many opportunities for professional growth for both librarians and staff. When librarians return from conferences and workshops, they share their knowledge or newly learned skills with their peers. The Director of ITS attends conferences on the future of educational technology and uses information and recommendations from these events to inform planning for his department.

Institutional linkages between departments are mostly very successful. Computer Information Systems takes care of infrastructure, administrative systems, classrooms, web and offices. ITS has instructional technology and the library is in charge of the labs and systems in their building. This does however cause some confusion for students who have to go to different help desks for their technology needs.

Librarians are ex-officio members of several curriculum committees on campus and are able to keep abreast of changes or new developments in course content.

#### Standard 5.E – Planning and Evaluation

Institutional planning is very top down and there is little involvement of the staff. Involvement is directly related to whether input is invited by the Dean of a department. Institutional planning is done at the Dean's Council level where the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the University Librarian as well as the Deans of all the colleges participate. When polled, staff said their input was not solicited for strategic planning and the 2014 Blueprint.

Extensive planning is being done within the library and ITS. The library is constantly evaluating its resources and services. Current efforts are underway to examine format issues in the delivery of content in periodicals. Workflow is being analyzed to streamline the movement of a book from its arrival to its place on the shelf. Space utilization is also under review.

ITS has an intentional planning process for new technology. The department awards planning grants to faculty to pilot products in a controlled environment before anything is adopted university wide. This summer, there are plans to pilot a new course management system.

## **STANDARD SIX – GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **Standard 6.A – Governance System**

Seattle Pacific University is independently governed by its Board of Trustees, as described in the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws. The University is affiliated with the Free Methodist Church of North America who founded the original school in 1891 for training missionary leadership.

The Board of Trustees is the final authority in matters of budgeting, planning, tenure and the appointment and evaluation of the President. The roles, responsibilities and authority of the Board, the President, administration, faculty, staff and students are developed and clearly described in the By-laws, the handbooks for faculty and staff and by the Constitution of the Associated Students of Seattle Pacific University.

### **Standard 6.B – Governing Board**

The Board of Trustees has fifteen members, which include five who are members of the Free Methodist Church and at least one alumnus/a. During the period leading to the 2014 Blueprint, following much discussion and deliberation, the Board decided to move from 33 members to 15, in an effort to make the Board more deliberative and less a “commenting” Board. The Free Methodist Church also approved this bold act. The Board proceeded to revise both The Articles of Incorporation and the By-laws, which were approved in 2005. In the restructuring the number of committees was reduced to four: Executive, Academic Affairs, Finance and Facilities, and Trusteeship.

The Review Committee met with five members of the Board, including the chair and two committee chairs, in a lively discussion of their role in the governance of the University. They are fully involved in the life and work of the University and well versed in the mission and planning of the University. They understand their role and responsibilities. In conversation with the vice presidents whose committees are no longer Trustee committees (Advancement, and Administration and University Relations), they felt they were represented and were called to participate, as appropriate. The Trustees are able to call upon others in case of need for information or discussion.

The Board of Trustees is made up of persons with backgrounds that are valuable for the University. There is only one woman and one person of color on the Board, but those with whom we spoke were aware of the need to provide more diversity and are considering doing so in the next round of appointments. In the process of the realignment, careful consideration was given to evaluation and all Trustees are evaluated near the end of their three-year term. Trustees may serve three three-year terms. We would recommend that the Board regularly evaluate its performance and revise, as necessary, its policies to demonstrate to its constituencies that it carries out its responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. With a Board of fifteen members, careful consideration must be given that there are sufficient qualified members to fully staff its committees and serve out all responsibilities of the Board.

The Board approves the annual budget and the long-range financial and facilities plans. The finance committee meets with the auditors and reviews the audit reports and the management letter. There is a conflict of interest statement, which is signed annually.

The Board was knowledgeable about the institution's accreditation status and the participation of one-third of the Board in our meeting was a strong indication of their interest, involvement and commitment to the University.

#### Standard 6.C – Leadership and Management

The University is led by a very active, involved President who completed ten years in service in 2006. Under President Eaton's leadership, planning has become central to the accomplishment of the mission and vision for SPU. He is well known on campus by all constituencies, communicates regularly by meeting with various groups and via written communications. He is active in the local area speaking, writing for local newspapers and hosting a very successful community breakfast featuring an outstanding speaker. These efforts have given greater visibility to SPU in the larger community.

The cabinet consists of four vice presidents, all of who are fully qualified and many of who have served SPU for many years. They include Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Business and Planning, Vice President for Administration and University Relations, and Vice President for University Advancement. These persons work directly with the President and are charged to align their work with the SPU mission and goals and strategic plans. The President annually evaluates them.

Administrators and staff who met with the Review Committee were energetic in the discussions of their work, many were alumni/ae of SPU, all were familiar with the mission and goals of the University, and discussed these in their conversation. Many have worked at SPU for many years, and had moved among various positions in their time at the University. This movement gave a good overall perspective of the institution. Though job evaluations are required, several persons said they had not had recent reviews, or their supervisor was reluctant to do an evaluation. Several had not been asked to participate in their supervisor's evaluation. Consideration must be given to ensure that all employees are evaluated on a regular basis. We found loyal and committed employees throughout the institution.

Institutional advancement activities are well organized and clearly and directly relate to the mission and goals of the institution. Plans are underway for another capital campaign as there have been several needs identified in the planning process, some of which will require significant capital investment. It is hoped that there will be wide participation in the planning and implementation of these plans.

Information is widely available and used well in decision-making. The Office of Information and Data Management provides information across the campus to assist the community with data for discussions, reports, etc. An opportunity for wider cooperation among constituencies would be appreciated, particularly in the planning stages.

Policies and procedures are widely distributed and readily available. The handbooks are well documented and information is accessible and periodically reviewed. Staff salaries and benefits are often issues of concern, particularly at our smaller institutions. However, persons with whom we talked are also mission driven in their work and support of SPU.

More effort needs to be made to enable faculty, staff and students to feel more involved in the planning, budgeting and evaluation processes, in a more interactive mode. Many of these folks are at SPU because of its mission and values based education and they are very supportive of the University, but many are seeking more involvement in the planning and decision-making. Their input could be valuable.

#### Policy 6.1 – Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

There is an Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination policy at SPU. It is widely available. In the hiring process, job duties and skills, knowledge and abilities are underscored so as to enable success. There is an emphasis on improving diversity in hiring faculty and staff, in recruiting students and in interacting with the community.

#### Policy 6.2 – Policy on Collective Bargaining

Seattle Pacific University does not have any collective bargaining agreements.

### **STANDARD SEVEN - FINANCE**

#### Standard 7.A – Financial Planning

The financial planning processes of Seattle Pacific University are very well controlled and are responsive to a well-defined strategic mission articulated by management, and approved by the board of trustees. This visionary guiding document, *2014: A Blueprint for Excellence*, points to the star goals the institution intends to reach by accomplishing numerous specific strategic indicators that will tell it when it has indeed become the *premier, national Christian university*

it intends to be. Those constantly monitored indicators help keep the institution ever-focused upon the interdependencies that must be carefully managed to do so.

Five-year budget plans are annually updated for the intermediate allocation of resources to fuel movement toward those goals and help SPU stay on that course. The annual budget process is initiated with a letter from the president that is both candid and inspiring in laying out the expectations and urgencies of accomplishing specific priorities. Management of the budget process is tightly controlled and is an iterative process. Advisory committees, composed of faculty (appointed from among members of the faculty council) and student leaders, are given access to sensitive budget assumptions related to the portion of the budget associated with undergraduate programs. Those independent committees are invited to provide input to the president's cabinet on priorities that should be included in the development of the Guideline Budget. Refinements of the initial estimates are made and then dean-determined internal reallocations are provided. While student budget committee members express feelings of appreciation and empowerment at being included, some deans and faculty, who are not involved in the faculty budget committee, feel isolated from the process by not being invited to provide input in a collaborative environment as key assumptions are established and refined. While this does not cause undue turmoil, deans and faculty members feel they could bring added strength to the budget development process if they were more actively included in intra- and cross-discipline assumption discussions.

#### Standard 7.B – Adequacy of Financial Resources

The university has established an operating approach that is persistent and committed to reaching its objectives. Resources are managed carefully but there are certainly challenges. GAAP basis operating deficits have been small and irregular and are more than offset in following year results.

Historically, there have not been sufficient donor resources to fund more than a small portion of the institutional financial aid extended to students. Of the computed tuition for fiscal 2006, less than 64% was the net tuition after scholarships and grants are deducted from undergraduate tuition. The net tuition is offset in part by 2% from endowment spending and 8% from gifts and grants.

Discussions with faculty, staff and students repeatedly indicated that, while not all desired initiatives find immediate funding sponsorship, adequate priority consideration is given and sufficient resources are eventually provided to sustain academic programs in a very acceptable manner.

Board-approved investment policies provide clear direction for investment allocations. University investments have been placed in diversified instruments, including local commercial property, some limited private placement equities, with the more significant portion being invested through Common Fund equity and debt securities. This approach has yielded market returns that exceed higher education averages and are improving endowment payout resources well beyond industry norms. However, the committee has concern that the investment portfolio

is underweighted in fixed income securities (less than 8% at June 2006), which increases the exposure to equity market fluctuations.

In recent years SPU has utilized significant debt levels to finance urgently needed academic building and housing needs. It is clear that the decision to use debt financing has been taken with great care and the continued management of that debt load is carefully monitored and considered in all spending plans. The wise use of interest rate swaps to limit exposure to the initially low variable rate financing has provided significant protection against subsequent rate fluctuations. In addition, management exhibits its prudence in providing adequate reserves to protect against contingencies that could arise which might limit the ability to satisfy those debt obligations.

#### Standard 7.C – Financial Management

The financial management organization ensures the integrity of institutional finances, creates appropriate control mechanisms, and provides sound financial decision-making information.

Central financial management is guided by a qualified chief financial officer supported by capable managers. Supporting the president's ability to report to the board, these leaders provide a very professional team that is aware of and effectively manage the financial affairs of the university. Financial reporting and discussion of financial matters with the governing board is clear and effectively supports their ability to make informed decisions and provide oversight and guidance to management. Board members confirm the quality of management's interaction and the ability of management to effectively present strategic alternatives and successfully accomplish agreed upon initiatives.

Financial reporting is timely and follows generally accepted accounting principles which are tested through the annual independent financial audit; clean audit opinions have been the norm through at least the last five years.

Most financial transactions are processed centrally which contributes to maintaining a consistent and effective internal control environment despite not having a formal internal audit function. The internal controls receive some annual external review through the external financial audit. Other independent control reviews have occurred in recent years covering information systems and other general business practices, but they are not conducted on a regular schedule. More frequent internal control reviews are encouraged, especially to address computer operations and programming.

The central review of transactions is adequate and campus personnel confirm an active and stringent review of transactions occur. Some financial procedures have been formally documented but an emphasis on identifying the key controls upon which reliance is placed has not been done which limits the likelihood those controls will be systematically reviewed and tested. Formally identifying control processes and systematically testing their effective operation should be considered.

While there is not a separate board-led audit committee, external auditors engaged by the board's Finance Committee, which includes the chief financial officer, meet with Committee members to present their audit report and management letter (improvement) suggestions. Recent results have been very positive and include only minor issues for recommended improvement.

Management and the board demonstrate sensitivity to the importance of strong internal controls but the board has not yet determined to pursue Sarbanes Oxley-related matters and related board oversight initiatives. Those matters have been discussed with representatives of the board with the encouragement to consider how Sarbanes principles might bring added awareness of and commitment to control responsibilities at all levels of the organization.

University financial statements are prepared timely and are widely distributed to support campus' ability to monitor the financial and budget status. Central accounting assists where necessary in developing summarized area reporting to overcome some inherent limitations of the Banner reporting system.

Technology Services has responded to recent security audit recommendations to strengthen change controls and to provide some impressive safeguards for data stored on personal computers—laptops and desktops attached to the university network that could contain sensitive information. Software controlled by the university encrypts files stored in the "My Documents" directory of those local computers, making them resistant to misuse, and at the same time transfers those files to the campus network for backup.

#### Standard 7.D – Fundraising and Development

SPU is heavily dependent upon its ability to attract and retain undergraduate students and their tuition revenues that fuel its operations because donor funding has been problematic over the years. Generous giving partners have been few in number or have been of insufficient means to provide significant scholarship funding or to build needed buildings. To meet *2014 Blueprint* objectives however, development staff has been added and there is a renewed commitment to pursue newly established giving strategies. Their success will be essential to meet the most urgent building needs.

There is a well-understood relationship between SPU and the Seattle Pacific Foundation. Because the university's CFO is also the Foundation's President, there is a true alignment of purpose and execution. The involvement of other qualified managers allows for a separation of duties and does not prompt concern.

### STANDARD EIGHT – PHYSICAL FACILITIES

#### Standard 8.A – Instructional and Support Facilities

SPU's Facility and Project Management team manage a very pleasing campus environment that contributes greatly to the overall joy of being part of this campus community. Their planning,

and development and renovation of buildings to meet the teaching and operational needs, are truly appreciated by the faculty, students and staff. Their efforts to manage the beautification of the campus grounds is appreciated and regularly praised.

The campus is truly bimodal in relation to its building facilities. Older facilities are in need of considerable maintenance while newer buildings, funded by the recent bonding, are delivering much needed space and functionality as well as allowing for the improvement of programs that are attracting prized students. Deferred maintenance on older buildings is gradually being addressed but at the present rate it will take at least seven years to resolve items considered to be urgent now. Yet those needs are systematically being dealt with by a finance and facilities team dedicated to an improved campus.

Newer classroom buildings have been well designed to fulfill the changing requirements of the faculty and students and at the same time benefit the campus environment. One shining example of this new construction is the science building that boasts having received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Building Certification. This difficult-to-receive award demonstrates to the campus and local community the university's commitment to be an example of low environmental impact.

Minor adjustments to older buildings are made as resources allow making them more useable and effective. Certain facilities have been identified for priority replacement pending a determination of funding strategies, which are being pursued at the time of this self-study. These are the Student Center, Fine Arts building, and the addition of a new Performance Hall. Each of these facilities has been long awaited by a patient campus and will bring tremendous capabilities and should attract additional students.

Residence halls are regularly complimented as being clean and well maintained, and are mentioned as providing highly desirable accommodations. Single family homes purchased from surrounding homeowners however do not enjoy such high praise and can be problematic. While they provide immediate and convenient housing options, and the potential for future campus expansion, they often come with pre-acquisition maintenance issues that must be addressed over time and this has caused some concern among students who rent these houses. Nonetheless, those concerns are gradually addressed as resources become available and there is a genuine desire to improve those accommodations.

Through several campus security initiatives, SPU is experiencing a much-reduced incidence of crime as compared to the surrounding area. In conjunction with that effort, the installation of 24-hour monitored security cameras in numerous locations has provided a tremendous layer of improved security to staff and students with the ability to respond rapidly to dangerous situations.

While it cannot be said that this hillside campus is easily navigated, considerable effort and cost has gone into improving access to those with mobility limitations. Unobtrusive walkway lifts and elevators in strategic locations help students or others with this need to get where they need to go. Reassignment of class locations make attendance possible for those few students who have that need. And, as buildings are remodeled, ADA requirements are met. When specific

housing or office space retrofitting is needed to improve accessibility, considerable effort is made to “do it right”.

#### Standard 8.B – Equipment and Materials

Faculty, students and administrators frequently expressed their sense that provided equipment is adequate and indeed of good quality to meet their teaching, study and administrative needs. Our observations confirmed that facilities and equipment are in general good order.

#### Standard 8.C – Physical Resources Planning

As noted previously in Standard 8.A, deferred maintenance is a real concern. \$7.3 mm of improvements have been identified as needing to be addressed immediately (1-5 years) to prevent jeopardizing the usefulness or safety of facilities (leaky roofs, threadbare carpet, fire alarm systems with obsolete parts, excessively old air handlers, etc...). An additional \$15.4mm is identified as at risk for obsolescence within 5 years. Assessments of the needs are documented and provided for consideration of those responsible for campus budgeting. Currently, these needs are being addressed at about the rate of \$1mm per year from a combination of budgeted funds (\$400k) and the use of budget surpluses (\$600k/ year). While these surpluses vary, there has been regular availability to at least that level of surplus funding for many years.

The April 2004 draft of the Blueprint Facilities Plan provides a comprehensive concepts list for how the campus should be planned and follows with specific projections for which buildings should fulfill those requirements. It is another example of the thoughtful planning work that helps guide SPU toward its goal of becoming a *premier, national Christian university*.

### **STANDARD NINE – INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY**

Seattle Pacific University adheres to the highest ethical standards in all aspects of its work. There is a very strong understanding of the mission of the University among members of the administration, faculty, staff, student body and trustees with whom we met. All advocate high ethical standards in the management and operations of the institution. The statement, “We seek to model a grace-filled community in all of our work and relationships” was often mentioned.

Students sign their acceptance of a statement on Life Style Expectations. Employees sign a statement “of personal faith and a description of how this faith informs one’s calling as an educator/employee.” There are ethical standards for faculty and standards re academic integrity for students and faculty. These are published in the various catalogs and handbooks. Members of the community cited these documents in their discussions about their life and work at SPU. Standards also include policies regarding sexual and racial harassment and procedures and penalties related to violations of these standards.

The University conducts periodic reviews of policies and procedures. There are periodic reviews but also when the Faculty Council, or other groups, have called attention to a problem, a review begins. Changes are reviewed and incorporated in the various publications, as appropriate.

There is a strong commitment to represent SPU accurately and consistently in all electronic and printed materials. The Communications Department has produced and adheres to clear guidelines on the quality of the materials distributed and the accuracy of the information distributed. The quality is very high and most materials are updated annually.

There is a clear conflict of interest policy for trustees, administrators, faculty and staff. These are stated in the various handbooks. The policy calls on all members of the community to practice high ethical standards and affirms that the primary work of all employees is their work at SPU. All are urged to avoid actual conflicts of interest as well as the appearance of conflicts. Conflicts or potential conflicts would be reported to the President who makes the final determination regarding the concern. Trustees are required to complete a conflict of interest questionnaire and to recuse themselves from any board action that may create a conflict of interest.

SPU adheres to the AAUP 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure as extended and amended in 1970 and 1990. This information is in the Faculty Handbook, along with the policies on professional ethics for faculty. The University affirms its overall commitment to academic freedom and the rights and responsibilities of that freedom.

The concluding paragraph of the Self-Study affirms this commitment. “As a Christian university, this commitment to academic freedom is grounded in the University’s identity and mission and its relationship to the Free Methodist Church. Therefore, faculty are asked to pursue their teaching and learning in the light of the historic orthodox Christian tradition grounded in Christian Scriptures. This does not constrain academic freedom but informs and guides that freedom.” (page 296)

## **COMMENDATIONS**

The Committee commends:

1. The administration, staff, faculty and students in their embrace and deep understanding of the mission of the University that guides them in their pursuit of a culture of ethics, competence, wisdom and a grace-filled community.
2. The Student Life staff for their expertise, demonstrated effectiveness, and strong commitment to the mission of the institution. The Center for Learning is an exceptional service area that benefits the students, the faculty who refer students, and the student tutors.

3. The librarians and staff who are held in very high regard by faculty and students who feel extremely well supported in their research. Librarians make an extraordinary effort at communication and collaboration with faculty and departments in the development of resources for their programs and the integration of information literacy outcomes.
4. The University for its programs in support of faculty development. In particular, the committee was impressed with the teaching workshops, the New Faculty Seminar, and the mentoring program for new faculty provided through the Center for Scholarship and Faculty Development.
5. The University on the effectiveness of the Department of Instructional Technology Services in engaging, challenging and nurturing faculty in appropriate uses of educational technologies to facilitate the preparation of students for leadership in an information society.
6. The Board of Trustees who, in a bold act in order to become a more deliberative body, has downsized the membership to fifteen.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) The Committee recommends that planning processes, including the preparation of budgets, involve appropriate constituencies to include students, staff, faculty, administration and Board members in a more interactive mode of shared decision-making. (Standard 1.B.3)
- (2) The Committee recommends that the University develop and implement appropriate procedures for its Study Abroad Programs. (Standard 2.G.12 and Policy 2.4)
- (3) The Committee recommends that the University take necessary steps to make available to prospective and enrolled graduate students information on rights and responsibilities, student conduct code, grievance policy, and student organizations and services. (Standard 3.B.5)
- (4) The Committee recommends that the University take necessary steps to make counseling and health services readily available in a timely manner to residential and commuter students, including full-time graduate students. (Standard 3.D.12)
- (5) The Committee recommends that the University review its procedures for post-tenure review with the intent of clarifying standards and responsibilities to ensure that regular post-tenure reviews occur. (Policy 4.1)
- (6) The Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees regularly evaluates its performance to demonstrate to its constituencies that it carries out its responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. (Standard 6.B.6)

