REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW To St. Patrick’s Seminary and University

Date of Visit
19 March - 21 March 2014

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Team Roster

Team Chair – Riess W. Potterveld
Acting President, Graduate Theological Union
Team Assistant Chair – DawnEllen Jacobs
Vice Provost, California Baptist University
Team Member – Bryce Mason
Director of Institutional Research, Loyola Marymount University
Team Member – Robert S. Sorensen
Chief Information Officer, Retired, Ivy Tech Community College
Staff Liaison – Barbara Gross Davis
Vice President, WASC

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

The formal action concerning the institution’s status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the WASC website.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SECTION I. OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit 3
B. The Institution’s Educational Effectiveness Review Report: 4
   Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report
C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review 4

## SECTION II. EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

Organization of the Team Report
Consideration of Recommendations from the CPR Visit 7
   1. Improving Assessment, Program Review, and Institutional Research (Standards II and IV)
   2. Refining Student Learning Outcomes (Standard II)
   3. Understanding Student Success (Standard II)
   4. Creating a Strategic Plan (Standard III)
   5. Enhancing Board Governance (Standard III)
   6. Adopting and Implementing a Credit Hour Policy (Standard I)

Other Issues Arising from the Standards and CFRs 14
   1. Institutional Leadership and Governance
   2. Institutional Integrity and Transparency
   3. Sustainability of Educational Effectiveness

## SECTION III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

Commendations
Recommendations

## APPENDICES 20

A. Credit Hour Policy Review
B. Marketing and Recruitment Review
C. Transfer Policy Review
D. Student Complaints Review
SECTION I – OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

A. Description of Institution and Visit

St. Patrick’s Seminary and University (SPSU), owned by the Archdiocese of San Francisco and under the local direction of the Priests of the Society of Saint Sulpice, is located in Menlo Park, CA and was incorporated according to the laws of the State of California in 1891. St. Patrick's is primarily a graduate level Theologate, preparing men for ordained ministry. The institution also offers a non-degree "pre-theology" program for men already possessing a bachelor’s degree in a field other than philosophy, an adult student program, and an undergraduate degree completion program in philosophy that prepares students to enter the Master of Divinity or Master of Arts programs at SPSU. The seminary has about thirty faculty split fairly evenly between full and part time members and serves just over 100 students, only a few of whom are undergraduates.

SPSU was granted initial accreditation in June, 1971. Although the institution has been continuously accredited over the last 30 years, the themes of recent past visits and interim reports have consistently focused on planning, financial sustainability, assessment, and program review. For example, in 1994, the Commission urged the institution “to engage in comprehensive, strategic long-term planning with a focus on financial and enrollment planning.” In 2005, the institution was asked to “clarify the distinction between an educational goal and student learning outcomes” and to “extend program review beyond the expectations of individual dioceses to include alumni and the laity of local churches in which its graduates serve.” In 2007, the institution was asked to address the “lack of clarity about the strategic planning process” and to give evidence of “greater intentionality in the internal coordination of assessment activities.” An Interim Report submitted by SPSU in March 2008 addressed the issue of strategic planning.

The institutional Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) report in Spring 2012 focused on three questions relating to concerns raised in past Commission letters:

1) How can SPSU refine its assessment tools to clearly identify perception-based and performance-based indicators of student learning?

2) How can the academic departments of SPSU demonstrate effective contributions to student learning, and how does the seminary marshal its faculty resources and deploy its institutional resources to enhance, strengthen, and improve student learning?

3) How does SPSU integrate programmatic assessment more intentionally and clearly into its assessment practices without compromising its system of individual student assessment?

While commending SPSU for taking seriously its mission to develop leaders, for beginning to create a culture of assessment, for cultivating a sense of community, and for its dedication to the students in their care, the CPR team identified a number of areas that still needed attention. These included: development and execution of a robust assessment model; articulation of expected learning outcomes and methods of measuring student achievement; attention to retention and graduation rates; enhanced strategic and fiscal planning processes; alignment of board governance with WASC policy on independent governing boards; and compliance with WASC policy on credit hours. The institution was urged to escalate its focus and attention on issues related to assessment of educational effectiveness throughout the institution in order to
demonstrate adequate progress by the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER).

B. The Institution’s Educational Effectiveness Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report

The Educational Effectiveness Review report from St. Patrick’s Seminary and University deviated somewhat from the standards-based approach taken in the Capacity and Preparatory Review report, but the approach chosen was deemed appropriate, given the three lines of inquiry outlined by the institution for this visit. The EER team report has been designed and organized to respond in a systematic way to the concerns raised from the CPR visit. It is clear that the institution has taken seriously the recommendations stemming from the CPR visit, and that SPSU has made significant progress toward addressing each issue, demonstrating a commitment to engage in thoughtful self-review and improvement.

Constituent involvement in the preparation and review of the institutional report (called the Action Report by SPSU) was largely concentrated at the level of department chairs and above. However, there were efforts to include faculty in the discussion of issues and recommendations stemming from the CPR visit. Although the institution has made serious attempts to engage in rigorous inquiry and has asked some probing questions, SPSU is still in the process of building the mechanisms and infrastructure that will allow it to demonstrate and sustain educational effectiveness. In many ways, the institutional report is more about demonstrating capacity than about utilizing data and evidence to support Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness. The institutional self-review clearly led to greater understanding of what it will take to be effective in evaluating student learning and what is required to create sustainable systems of quality improvement. What the report did not adequately demonstrate and what was still a question in the team’s mind at the end of the visit is the degree to which this institution is capable of, not just committed to, sustaining systematically this sort of inquiry and analysis moving forward.

C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review

SPSU has clustered the seven recommendations from the CPR report into six somewhat thematic sections that list the steps taken and activities engaged in by the institution as they have attempted to address the CPR recommendations. This approach gives the EER report more of a thematic tone that sometimes makes it somewhat challenging to structure a response that comports to the standards-based tone of the proposal and the CPR, but the organization is appropriate for the institution’s purpose and is consistent with their desire to provide in-depth narrative responses to recommendations set forth in the CPR team report.

Refining student learning outcomes – CPR recommendations 1 and 2

At the time of the CPR, SPSU was in the beginning stages of incorporating learning outcomes in courses and programs. Since that time, the institution has refined student learning outcomes in various degree programs (Action Report [AR] Section IV) and the pastoral year program (AR Section VI.8) and has instituted annual reports from academic departments (AR Section VI) that include student learning outcomes. The institution has attempted to align the Master of Divinity (M.Div.)/Bachelor of Sacred Theology (S.T. B.) program goals and outcomes with the goals and outcomes for priestly formation. However, alignment between program level goals and
measurable student outcomes, in terms of what students will do to demonstrate learning or levels of mastery, still seems to be lacking (AR Section IV.1.3). Articulation between learning outcomes and the Pillars of Priestly Formation (PPF) are projected to be reflected on course syllabi, but it is unclear what other steps are being taken to communicate expectations clearly to students (AR Section IV 1.3).

**Improving assessment, program review and institutional research** – CPR recommendations 1 and 2

Review of degree programs was cited as evidence of the institution’s efforts to improve its culture of assessment (AR Section IV). The M.Div/S.T.B. program review was “truncated” because of time constraints (AR. Section VII.4) and was not finalized for the team in written form. SPSU undertook an assessment of learning outcomes in various degree programs (AR Section IV.1.3) and reviewed the Capstone assessments including the S.T.B. Examination (AR Section V). While the next steps in programmatic review are projected, some of these, such as tracking proficiency in core competencies and the use of a dashboard to demonstrate student achievement (AR Section V3), are areas in which a team would expect an institution to be able to demonstrate achievement at the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review visit. Annual reports of academic departments (AR Section VI) show evidence of good beginning dialogue and the potential to engage in quality improvement in these programs, but actual data and evidence of its use were minimal. A program review conducted of the pastoral year program (AR Section VI.8) also shows promise, but does not in itself provide evidence of a fully developed and sustainable assessment model. Similarly, the office of institutional research (AR IX.2) is too newly established to give the team a sense of how effective it will be or what role it will play in sustaining a culture of assessment and quality improvement at the institution.

**Understanding student success** – CPR recommendation 3

The Action Report points to contextualized comparative data to report SPSU’s graduation and retention rates (AR Appendix C). Other efforts such as the CARA study (AR Section VI.9) or syllabus review (AR Section VI.10) tend to focus more on program design and delivery than on student achievement. The team was pleased to see that SPSU publishes on its website a narrative summary of degree completion rates for seminarians.

**Creating a strategic plan** – CPI recommendations 4 and 5

The institution has created a strategic plan (AR VIII.2 and Exhibit 18). The document begins with a several page summary of thoughts and guidance that convey the basic priorities and outlook of the school and its mission. The document then includes sets of goals and objectives that are detailed and might be called not just a strategic plan but a handbook stating exactly and precisely what is to be undertaken and accomplished throughout the institution. Although the predominant interest is in educational and formational issues and initiatives, the plan also addresses capital expenditures, financial resource development, and enrollment objectives. There was no way to differentiate or discriminate among the numerous goals and objectives which ones were of higher priority or deemed to be keys to the achievement of other consequential goals.
Enhancing board governance – CPR recommendation 6

SPSU has taken dramatic action in dissolving the board of regents and reconfiguring the makeup and responsibilities of the board of trustees (AR Section VIII). The team was impressed with the sweeping changes and the newly revitalized board of trustees. The board has added several independent board members and members acknowledged their understanding that a fund-raising function has been passed to the board from the former regents. The board of trustees approved the SPSU strategic plan in December 2013 gaining alignment between the board and the administration.

Adopting in implementing a credit hour policy – CPR recommendation 7

SPSU adopted a credit hour policy that meets WASC requirements and had begun to use the policy as part of the syllabus review process (AR Section VI.10).

Additional Issues Noted by the Team

The team weighed the institution’s history of progress and stagnation relative to past interactions with WASC and considered the progress that has been made since the CPR visit. Although SPSU is still not where a team would expect an institution to be in terms of demonstrable evidence of educational effectiveness, the team noted a markedly different climate of engagement and dialogue at SPSU. The institution was open, self-reflective and candid in assessing its strengths and areas for improvement, which bodes well for the institution’s ability to sustain the progress it has made.

Recent issues of financial integrity related to the embezzlement of funds and changes in key leadership positions raised questions about whether SPSU would be able to undertake the necessary steps to continue its progress in educational effectiveness and embrace WASC accreditation demands. Compelling evidence was gathered during the initial interview with the president/rector and the cabinet during which these key leaders stated strong commitments to and rationale for maintaining WASC accreditation. Institutional leadership, including the Archbishop of San Francisco, was aware of the issues faced by the institution and understood the need to improve communication externally with dioceses and bishops and internally with the campus community and to address SPSU’s financial control concerns. New leadership has been selected with an eye to building a culture of assessment, and new individuals have been identified for the board and administrative positions with consideration of the experience they can bring to assessment and accreditation. There was general consensus among SPSU stakeholders that the institution needed to work diligently to move forward and not revert to “business as usual” as they have tended to do in the past. While this was encouraging, the team found evidence that this same attitude was not as consistently communicated or embraced among the wider community.
SECTION II – EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS

Organization of the EER Team Report

Although the institution’s proposal and CPR report were organized around a review by the standards, the institution’s EER Action Report was organized in response to the CPR team recommendations. The EER team has thus elected to organize its report around the institution’s response to these recommendations. The team also examined additional areas including institutional leadership and governance, institutional integrity, and the institution’s ability to sustain educational effectiveness.

Consideration of Recommendations from the CPR Visit

1. Continue to develop and execute its fledgling assessment model, recognizing that there are many steps in institutional assessment at the level of educational programs and faculty review that will need to be addressed by the EER. In particular, the school needs to move quickly to a regularized process of faculty review. (CFRs 2.3, 2.6, 3.3)

Immediately after the CPR, SPSU hired full-time an Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) who was named provost shortly thereafter. The provost, along with the dean of men and department chairs, has driven many of the early stages of assessment planning and implementation. Each faculty member was given personal instruction in assessment and tools of assessment. A template for syllabi with student learning outcomes and a handbook on assessment were developed. Department chairs were given responsibility for overseeing academic policies and implementing assessment procedures. These department chairs expressed enthusiasm for the tasks, acknowledged the value of the assessment process, and welcomed the increased dialogue their work had engendered among previously siloed units. More formal training in assessment and program review, according to the department chairs, is needed to continue to develop a sustainable assessment model. (CFR 3.4)

SPSU is working to broaden the participation of its entire faculty in the assessment process. (CFRs 2.4, 3.2) Faculty members have revised syllabi using the new template and credit hour policy. The majority of syllabi reviewed incorporated the new template and addressed the credit hour policy. In addition, SPSU has made concerted efforts to refine course outcomes and articulate expectations for student learning (CFR 2.3). In some cases, the alignment between course outcomes and program outcomes, particularly the PPF, is apparent but still emerging. (CFR 2.6) The new syllabus format and learning outcomes received a mixed reception from students, with some students enthusiastic about the changes and other students noting that a few faculty members have gone overboard in specifying learning outcomes. (CFR 2.3)

Program Review

Only one program review (M.Div/S.T.B.) had been completed at the time of the EER visit, but was not yet available as a written document. Though SPSU had made considerable progress since the CPR visit in the area of program review, it still remains behind where it needs to be.
The institution has benefitted from visits to peer institutions and from examination of the best practices of these peer institutions. (CFR 3.4) The team encourages the institution to continue such visits and to include colleagues at these peer institutions in their program reviews as the assessment model continues to evolve and mature. An additional marker of maturity in the assessment model will be incorporation of the results of program review into the strategic planning, curricular planning, and budgeting processes. As yet, there does not seem to be sufficient data available, nor is there sufficient sophistication in the analysis of the available data to drive decision-making at an institutional or program level.

Faculty Review

SPSU has put in place a robust process of faculty review. Each faculty member is observed in class and participates in pre- and post-observation discussions in order to improve teaching strategies. Faculty response to these observations varied, but was generally positive; and most faculty seemed very willing to participate in this form of review. Faculty perceived the observations to be helpful and informative when feedback was provided in a timely manner. However, faculty expressed dissatisfaction when observations were conducted by administrators who did not follow through with post-observation discussion or feedback. Faculty seemed to find observations by department chairs to be the most valuable, but observations by the provost were also well received. SPSU has implemented a new system for students to evaluate their instructors to complement the school’s in-class observation processes.

Although faculty members participate in scheduled in-services in the fall and spring and may avail themselves of other professional development opportunities. There seems to be no systematic plan or requirement for faculty development. (CFR 3.4) In some departments, targeted conferences provide opportunities for faculty to participate in discipline-focused training, but this is not widespread across the campus. Some faculty suggested that additional computer training would be helpful, and student interviews confirmed that faculty’s ability to incorporate technology into teaching varied widely. Some faculty embrace technology and use it effectively, while others ignore it completely or are not particularly adept at using it. Interviews with students revealed that faculty’s efforts to incorporate more active learning strategies and group work in the classroom were met with a range of responses from enthusiasm to confusion. The team concluded that faculty development activities around pedagogical strategies could benefit instructors, particularly in clarifying how to present innovative teaching techniques to students in ways that they can understand and embrace. (CFRs 3.2, 3.4)

Conclusion

The team found SPSU to be in an emerging state of assessment and program review. Syllabi and the institution’s annual assessment reports reflected stated student learning outcomes for most programs and courses. Varying levels of assessing results have taken place, and some faculty and departments have used these results to inform curriculum, assignments, and instructional methods. However, considerable progress is needed to create a robust and sustainable culture of assessment.

The team identified the need for additional faculty training in assessment processes and procedures, and found little evidence of systematic faculty participation in WASC or other formal or on-going training programs in these areas. Additional faculty development efforts are
needed to sustain SPSU’s assessment efforts and to prevent the institution from reverting to past practice.

SPSU is strongly encouraged to include all of its stakeholders in ongoing discussions about educational effectiveness as the institution’s assessment culture matures and develops. (CFR 4.8) A mature culture systematically integrates assessment and program reviews into general curriculum and instructional planning, strategic planning, and budgeting. A mature culture gathers, analyzes, and uses quantitative data on student success. (CFRs 2.10, 4.6)

2. Carefully articulate the expected learning outcomes and evaluative measurements utilized to assess such key concepts as, for example —cultural competency or —ability to incorporate theological reflection into homiletical oration, which are stated as essential outcomes for a SPSU education. Outcomes should be stated clearly in terms of observable student behaviors and other benchmarks that are consistently connected among various courses, experiences, assignments, and assessment tools. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4)

The team observed that students and faculty members were able to express various degrees of understanding of the school's assessment efforts. Most faculty members were found to have reworked their syllabi to state course goals consistently via learning outcomes (CFR 2.3). Department chairs led a careful course mapping exercise that has helped shape sequencing and offerings. Rubrics are beginning to be developed and used to measure student work. The annual seminarian self-evaluation and teacher/priest evaluations serve as an excellent opportunity to do indirect formative assessment of students' progress in priestly formation. However, heavy reliance on student self-evaluations and course evaluations, even when mixed with faculty observations, which comment broadly on the student's formation in the four pillars, may not identify specific deficiencies in their learning sufficient to improve student outcomes.

The Systematic Theology Department provided a fairly clear rubric on which to grade student performance on the spring 2013 STB/M.Div comprehensive written and oral exams. The faculty tabulated and summarized student performances across the varying thesis topics students chose. The department also appeared to interpret these findings by writing "next steps" in the margins next to the data (CFR 4.4). Planning for future assessment has also taken place as exhibited in the institution's "Assessment Report on Student Learning 2012-13" document, where higher-level learning outcomes for most major programs and areas of study were present.

Student seminarians indicated to the team that the new system was easy to understand and simplified the process by which they could provide evaluative perspectives. (CFR 3.3) What was less clear to students was the reasoning behind some of the new assessment tools, particularly the self-evaluation instrument used to measure learning in the Pastoral Year program. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3) It did not appear that the purpose of the instrument or its use had been adequately communicated to students, nor did it appear that students or faculty below the department chair level had had input into the creation of this instrument. (CFR 1.7, 4.8) The institution did not seem to have examined the potential impact of the new assessment practices on the learning process from the students’ perspective or that this shift in institutional priorities could challenge students’ understanding of what it means to be involved in their own learning. (CFR 2.5)

One area that needs further attention is cultural competence. The mission statement contains this sentence: “Through human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral development, it enables Christ-
centered men to grow and excel as collaborative, **culturally-aware** pastoral leaders ...” (underlining and boldface added). This statement of mission ties back to a recommendation in the CPR visit that suggested that SPSU further develop what the school means by and how it measures “cultural competence.”

In reference to the pre-theology program, the current self-study document makes reference to the need to include exposure to Eastern philosophical traditions as well as Western (or European) models. The reasoning offered is that many candidates for priesthood derive from Asian and South Asia cultures (30% of the student population is Filipino and Vietnamese) and that among US Catholic populations, many experience their faith in cultures influenced by non-Western cultures and philosophies. The students are preparing to serve a Catholic Church that is profoundly multi-cultural.

However, in Exhibit 19 of the Action Report, which lays out the parameters for evaluating cultural competence, the reference is to a student’s ability to demonstrate that he can distinguish between Catholic and secular culture and can clearly differentiate the weaknesses (sinful character) of secular culture. The distinction offered in Exhibit 19 seems somewhat removed or at odds with the self-study description of “cultural competence” as the ability to stand within two different philosophical schemas – one Western and one Eastern. The institution might be better served to formulate one comprehensive view of the meaning of “cultural competence” and then establish a consistent set of rubrics and outcomes for evaluating this competency. Evidence gathered during the visit indicates that student concerns about the degree to which the institution values cultural diversity might also benefit from more discussion about what is meant by “cultural competence” and an examination not only of student outcomes, but of curricular design and co-curricular programming. (CFR 2.10, 2.11)

The team noted an apparent lack of inclusion of the English Language Program (ELP) in the discussion about cultural competence. There was no clear sense of connection between the need to develop appropriate language and communication skills and the need to be culturally competent, nor was it clear to the team that the institution had carefully considered whether a prescriptive approach to language learning was harmonious with the institutional definition of cultural competence or what the role of the ELP (or more precisely language learning) should be in relation to native English speakers. (CFR 2.1, 2.11) Continued development of program review and assessment processes would provide the institution with the data necessary to explore such important questions. Although it is somewhat unclear whether ELP is considered curricular or co-curricular, more robust assessment plans for programs such as the ELP, which underwent a “mini-review” in spring 2013 (AR Section VII.2), should also be developed in an institution prepared to demonstrate educational effectiveness. (CFRs 2.4, 2.7)

3. Pay particular attention to retention and graduation rates. The Commission expects that graduation rate and time to degree data be disaggregated by variables important to the mission of the institution. (CFR 1.2)

Although the usual requirement to publish retention and graduation rates on undergraduate, new freshmen cohorts obviously does not apply in this case, SPSU has taken the initiative to publish a narrative summary of degree completion rates on its website. (Under Academics, then Educational Effectiveness). The team was impressed to see this level of transparency and encourages the institution to utilize these data more effectively in its assessment endeavors, and
suggests that data be updated to reflect more current information. SPSU reports that 88% of the 2011-12 M.Div/S.T.B graduates were ordained into the priesthood. Graduates averaged 86% on the comprehensive exam that measures achievement of the competencies outlined in the PPF. All graduates (100%) from the BA Theology program advanced to the major seminary and are pursuing studies towards ordination in the priesthood. Students in the MA Theology program completed their degree in an average of 2 years and scored an average of 91% on the thesis defense and comprehensive exam that measure student proficiency in that program.

The mission of SPSU is clearly stated in multiple institutional contexts and with specific reference to the U.S. Bishop’s Program of Priestly Formation, 5th Edition [PPF]. There was evidence throughout the Action Report that SPSU utilizes the PPF in determining curriculum, learning outcomes, and formation and that the standards within PPF are somewhat congruent with the SLOs and rubrics that have been developed by faculty members and department chairs.

SPSU already produces some basic statistics required for its constituents. The registrar compiles an annual student profile that reports admissions counts and overall enrollments. These are disaggregated by class as well as by key demographic information, including age, ethnicity, citizenship, country of origin, and sponsoring diocese. The registrar also compiled a report listing reasons students have left the program, although there are very few of these students in a typical year. (CFR 2.10)

Retention data are currently organized in a point-in-time report listing everyone who left "this year." Reorganizing this information using a cohort-based approach would allow SPSU to compile longitudinal data related to the seminarians' persistence through their formative years. Current systems of data collection seem inadequate to support a growing culture of assessment or to provide meaningful data on student progress towards a degree. As with the faculty, additional training and support for staff and consideration of appropriate technologies to support a more sophisticated approach to data storage and analysis would serve the institution well. (CFR 3.4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4)

With such data at hand, the institution would be better positioned to use data in meaningful ways, thus demonstrating educational effectiveness. For example, comparison between seminarian and priest could provide rich data on a number of areas of strengths and weaknesses of the individual student. This would assist the institution in articulating whether graduation and retention rates were “good enough” and in defining better what was meant by student success. As the institution matures in its ability to analyze such data, and with more robust tools with which to aggregate the data, findings might be aggregated up to a class level and analyzed in a way that would provide valuable information about trends at a programmatic level. This could help answer questions about how the entire class was doing in certain areas, especially if there were significant disconnects between student and faculty evaluations in common areas. (CFR 2.9) Such mature analysis would also consider benchmark data gathered during continued visits to other institutions to discover and study best practices in program delivery and assessment.

The ability of SPSU to engage in the types of robust data analysis expected of a well-developed assessment program is hampered by its lack of technological infrastructure. At the time of the 2012 visit, IT support was provided by students. Since that time the institution has engaged a professional consultant to provide IT support. An IT audit is currently being performed in order to develop a strategic IT plan. Of particular interest is the question of whether or not SPSU can
continue to afford professional IT consultants or whether it needs to develop its own IT capability.

The team identified the improvement of information technology infrastructure as a pressing need. Administrative software systems to support the accounting, student, advancement, and personnel data needs of staff are essential to improve efficiency of those functions was well as provide easily accessible data for institutional research purposes. (CFR 3.7)

4. Continue to develop the process of planning for both short term and long term goals and utilize the period prior to the EER visit to create a viable strategic plan for the institution that incorporates widespread stakeholder input and that gives the institutional clear direction as it moves forward. (CFRS 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

One recommendation of the CPR was that SPSU focus on developing a strategic plan that would appropriately align educational mission, finance, and resources. It is clear from the Action Report (Section VIII.2) that the institution responded quickly. Aided initially by a consultant, who has since become the CFO and chief administrative officer, SPSU worked through four committees (involving faculty, administrative staff, and trustees) to develop an institution-wide strategic plan that was accepted by the board of trustees in December 2013. The implementation phase of the plan began on January 1, 2014. (CFR 4.1) The plan outlines and documents next steps for the institution that are broad in scope, containing an undifferentiated compilation of tasks addressing to varying degrees everything from academic programs to capital improvements to fundraising to faculty development. The team suggests that SPSU prioritize the many items contained in the plan and select for implementation the highest priorities. (CRF 4.2 and 4.3) Such prioritization would allow for the further development of the plan, the addition of specific deadlines, clarification of deliverables, provision of resources, and selection of individuals responsible for each priority. More importantly, it would allow the institution to connect the financial plan and budget more clearly to the strategic plan and to utilize data collected from its emerging assessment model to inform strategic thinking and planning. (CFR 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)

5. Create a basic fiscal plan that coherently explains the financial goals of the institution over the next five years and sets forth the ways that key administrators and boards will work cooperatively to achieve these goals, especially in regard to the generation of major gifts. (CFRs 3.5, 3.6)

The institution has an endowment sufficient to provide financial sustainability. However, the budget may not be sufficient to provide for financial flexibility, particularly in relationship to current and deferred maintenance issues. The SPSU strategic plan proposes that improved financial flexibility will come through enhanced advancement activities. The team confirmed that the advancement organization and initiatives put in place in 2012 have not been successful. Both finance and advancement are addressed in the institution’s strategic plan, but goals and objectives in both areas began on January 1, 2014. It was not clear how the strategic plan will be implemented.

One of the goals of the financial strategic plan is to increase tuition revenue. SPSU recognizes that it needs to improve its marketing efforts to bishops in the dioceses who nominate and pay for seminarians to attend SPSU. Implementation of a marketing plan to sustain the size of its
student body is a goal of the strategic plan. In its meeting with the trustees, the team confirmed the importance of this marketing initiative and the commitment of the board to it.

SPSU has limited its payout to 3-3 ½% of a twelve-quarter rolling average of the market value of its endowment. Industry data suggest that a 4-4 ½% spending rate would be sustainable. In its on-site discussion with staff, the team found that the difference between what might be considered as an industry average and what the institution has been spending has served as a mechanism for building an operating contingency into their budget. Unused monies in the contingency plans provide for a modest growth in endowment size. (CFR 3.5) Since the CPR visit in 2012, SPSU has reorganized advancement activities and has begun to initiate planning process for growing endowment through outright gifts and planned giving. Review of the institution’s management report and institutional response as well as interviews with the new auditor confirmed a heightened sensitivity to internal control issues. The team encourages the institution, in its allocation of resources, to continue to work towards prioritizing educational effectiveness and assessment. (CFR 3.8)

6. Work with WASC staff to address WASC’s draft policy on independent governing boards. (CFR 3.9 and Draft Policy for Independent Governing Boards)

Since the Capacity and Preparatory Review, St. Patrick’s Seminary and University has reviewed its governing board policies and practices relative to the Commission’s Policy on Independent Governing Boards and has implemented several significant changes to address issues under the guidelines of “Policy on Independent Governing Boards.” The board of regents, which was a secondary advisory body primarily charged with fund development for the school, was dissolved and the board of trustees has assumed the task of fund development in addition to its other fiduciary responsibilities. The size of the board was expanded from 13 to a maximum of 25 to allow for the election of independent members who are not employees of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and therefore not subject to potential conflict of interest between the interests of the Diocese and the school. In addition, a conflict-of-interest policy was created and was signed in the February 2014 meeting. (CFR 3.9)

There seem to be consensus at the institution, and the team would concur, that this has been a positive move for SPSU. There is an energy and collective commitment to the institutional mission among the board members that bodes well for the institutions ability to move into a new and more effective season of leadership from this new body. Board members seem appropriately aware of the need to continue to define and communicate the board's role in addressing institutional issues and meeting the expectations of its various constituents. Of particular importance will be discussions that help the board to define its role in strategic planning and development.

7. Develop a policy on credit hours, as quickly as possible in conformance with Commission policy, and assure consistency and alignment among the policy, the information on syllabi, and practice. (CFR 1.9, 2.2 and Credit Hour Policy)

The institution submitted a credit hour policy that was reviewed during the visit and was found to be in compliance with the Commission’s Policy on the Credit Hour. The institution has also

1 2013 NACUBO-Commonfund Study of Endowments
undertaken serious evaluation of engaged learning time in many of its courses and includes a statement of a credit hour policy on most syllabi. Some exemplary syllabi provide a table which outline expected engaged time for the various activities included in the course.

An area of continued attention will be the Pastoral Year Program. Although a review of the credit hours awarded for this practicum year was completed shortly after the CPR visit, work on that review is not particularly well reflected in a course syllabus. Continued attention will also be needed during the program review process as faculty evaluate whether or not engaged learning time estimates are appropriate. Dialogue with faculty and input from students will be helpful as the institution continues to assure the accuracy of its estimates and the appropriateness of its expectations for student engagement.

Other Issues Arising from the Standards and CFRs

1. Institutional Leadership and Governance

SPSU has continued to experience significant transition in its administrative leadership. The current interim president/rector, while a graduate of SPSU and familiar with the school, also serves as Auxiliary Bishop of San Jose. In the period following the CPR visit, the director of finance and an assistant were criminally charged with embezzlement and dismissed from employment. The former academic dean relinquished that position and took on a new role as dean of men. The chief advancement officer during the CPR visit was relieved of his duties. The new academic dean is now executing those responsibilities. During this period, a new Archbishop of San Francisco was also named and became the chair of the board of trustees. These changes of key personnel pose challenges to the continuity of systems and progress within the institution, especially since this is a pattern that was identified in the last visit as potentially problematic.

In the initial telephone call between interim president/rector and the WASC team chair, it was communicated that the former academic dean, now dean of men, will become the new permanent president/rector as of June 1, 2014. Since he is well known to the community and has served in at least two senior positions within the administration, this should provide an important degree of continuity for the St. Patrick’s community.

While the team concluded that the institution has sufficient full-time leadership in its CEO and CFO functions, it was concerned that some administrators, such as the academic dean, were tasked with heavy administrative and academic duties. Evidence that such dual responsibilities were unrealistic came in faculty dissatisfaction with the level of responsiveness of some members of the administration to academic concerns such as faculty classroom observations. (CFR 3.10)

The expectation for the new rector/president to interact with large numbers of sending bishops or the goal for the academic dean/vice president of advancement to visit large numbers of potential donors needs to be evaluated in relation to expectations for academic oversight of a new and somewhat tenuous culture of assessment. The team felt this combination of roles required such a different and distinct set of skills and competencies, each requiring such a high level of time commitment, that it would indeed be difficult for one person to be successful in both roles. Feedback from staff and faculty indicate that this is already the case. The team strongly urges
SPSU to focus on achieving stability and effectiveness in its organizational structures by reviewing job descriptions and assignments in light of priorities in the strategic plan and institutional goals. (CPR 3.8)

Similarly, although the new board of trustees seems to have enthusiastically and realistically embraced its new role, they are as yet untried in their execution of their duties and responsibilities. In keeping with the evaluative measures set forth in the Commission Policy on Independent Governing Boards, SPSU will need to carefully evaluate the performance of the board and make adjustments as needed as this leadership body settles in to its new role. (CFR 1.3)

Attention to faculty and student concerns about the changing climate of the institution is also warranted and will need to be a consideration in allocating administrative time. It was clear in interviews with several constituent groups that there are still many questions about institutional stability moving forward and no small degree of angst about what is to come. Leadership is encouraged to communicate often with internal constituents as further changes take place to allay fears and avoid potentially harmful speculation. (CFR 4.1)

2. Institutional Integrity and Transparency

In its meetings with administrators and staff, the team learned that lack of communication during the organizational changes over the last two years has resulted in some laxity in enforcement of human relations policies and procedures. The institution should take advantage of the process for updating the staff handbook as a vehicle for reviewing and updating policies and procedures, fully communicating them to all constituents, and putting in place procedures to ensure that all policies and procedures are being consistently followed. (CFR 3.3) Some clarification of roles, responsibilities, and reporting relationships will be needed.

During the visit, the team was informed that not all staff members have up-to-date job descriptions commensurate with their contemporary duties and that performance reviews on an annual basis have taken place only in a few departments. (CFR 3.3) In some instances, personnel have been terminated or hired quickly and without much due process, leaving other staff uncertain as to the procedures that officially guide the institution and are applicable at all levels of the institution as it exercises personnel decisions.

The team was told, but was unable to verify, that 24 persons had either left or been let go during the previous two years. The institution should seriously consider the need for the rector/president to define the roles and authority allotted to each staff and administrative position and clarify these to ensure a coordinated and functional administrative and academic infrastructure is achieved. As staff and administrators gain longevity and confidence in their new roles, and as the responsibilities of these roles are better delineated, communicated, understood, and exercised, the team expects that the institution will experience better efficiency, enjoy a higher degree of educational effectiveness, and experience a renewed sense of community among these people who obviously share a commitment to the institution and its mission. (CFR 3.1)
3. Sustainability of Educational Effectiveness

Although SPSU has made broad progress in the two years since the CPR visit, the depth of assessment and program review across the institution is uneven. Administration and key leadership voices support, but it is at the program and department level that faculty seemed tasked with forging the necessary changes to bring about institutional effectiveness. This is in some ways a positive step, as educational effectiveness must be measured at the level of student engagement in the educational process; however, faculty need to be fully invested in and support to execute the tasks necessary to create and sustain a robust culture of assessment. Given the focus on the department chairs as the drivers of these initiatives, the team was not surprised to find relatively better evidence of summative outcomes at the program level (e.g., as measured through the STB); however, course level data on student learning were not as common and rubrics were not as well-formed in general. A small number of faculty members even vocalized discontent with having to integrate assessment practices within their courses. There was a similar gap in aggregating assessment data up to the entire institution to examine student performance at an institutional level. It seemed to the team that, although faculty were willing to engage in this important work, few felt they had the training to drive it at the pace needed to bring the institution up to an appropriate level to demonstrate educational effectiveness.

Learning outcomes were better and more clearly articulated in some instances than in others. Everyone seems to recognize the importance of the PPF, even though the sense of how those goals align with course and program outcomes that are written in more measurable assessment “language” is somewhat vague. Top leadership expressed strong desire to measure certain learning outcomes that are not present in the PPF, but how these outcomes should be articulated, developed and assessed was unclear. Equally unclear or undefined was the degree to which English language skills related to cultural competence, especially when there was a marked difference between the cultural and linguistic background of the seminarian and the parishioners within the target parish.

SPSU has certainly improved in its understanding of student learning and had improved its ability to collect data necessary to evaluate that learning. The team concludes that the amount of work to be accomplished the time frame between the CPR and the EER combined with the need for far more training for key assessment leaders has left the institution ahead of where it was but still behind where they need to be in building a culture of assessment and program review. Faculty working under the direction of the provost are to be commended for the work they have undertaken, for the good questions they are asking, and for moving the institution in the right direction prior to this EER visit. That work and those efforts have not been taken lightly by the team.

Still, the Commission is fairly clear on the expectations that define an educationally effective institution with a sustainable culture of assessment, and several next steps are essential if SPSU is to complete and sustain the work they have begun. Key leadership at the administrative and the faculty level must be trained and equipped to work directly with the results of student learning if it is to improve the quality of the evidence of that learning and to improve its ability to evaluate the results of that analysis. This more mature analysis will better enable the institution to make use of data to set targets and benchmarks for improvement consistently across all programs. More engagement with WASC training opportunities and other WASC accredited institutions would better equip the institution to develop a program review process for all
academic and co-curricular programs that proceeds in a timely manner and follows good practices that are appropriate for an institution such as SPSU. Results of these systemic reviews should be reflected in ongoing program quality improvement as well as aligned with the planning and budgeting processes of the institution.

Continued progress towards and achievement of these steps will demonstrate to the Commission that SPSU has indeed turned a corner as a learning institution with the capacity and commitment to sustain their emerging model of assessment in the years ahead.
SECTION III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The team heard consistently the positive impact that this review cycle has had on the institution and the degree to which it served as a “wake-up call” to take seriously the need to address, not just for the short term but for the sustainable future, concerns raised by previous WASC visits. The changes SPSU has made in the last two years have not been easy or comfortable ones, and there are still challenges ahead as the work continues. A distinct difference in this visit, however, was the attitude with which the institution faced the reality of these challenges, voiced their commitment to improvement, and demonstrated their resolve to sustainable and continued change through realigned leadership and careful examination of curriculum through the lens of educational effectiveness. The visiting team concluded that SPSU has not yet arrived where it needs to be, but that its leaders and staff seem committed to becoming the educationally effective institution that all desire. Rarely have team members had the privilege to talk with staff, administration and faculty who so universally understood and were committed to the mission of their institution.

Commendations:

1. The staff, faculty, alumni, students, and trustees have demonstrated admirable dedication to the mission of St. Patrick’s Seminary and University.

2. The institution has taken seriously the recommendations of the Capacity and Preparatory Review and undertaken a broad range of actions designed to respond to those recommendations by, for example, eliminating a confusing trustee and regent model and clarifying the fiduciary role of the board and ensuring that increased numbers of independent members have a significant role to play in policy development, financial structure, and substantive institutional decisions.

3. St. Patrick’s Seminary and University has focused on assessment and has consequently made significant strides in establishing institution-wide assessment. Department chairs have undertaken noteworthy work in moving forward important aspects of assessment, including developing templates for syllabi and early stage development of student learning outcomes, rubrics, and measurements.

4. SPSU has begun to systematically retrieve and incorporate feedback from stakeholders including alumni, sending Bishops, and persons engaged in supervision of Pastoral year and field education.

5. The library technology provides students and faculty easy access to hard copy and on-line resources. Its web page facilitates search processes and the improved cataloging system provides enhanced accountability for student borrowing.

Recommendations:

1. Review the strategic plan to differentiate goals that are of the highest importance and include indicators that tie plans back to budgeting, action time lines, and assigned responsibility. (CFRs 4.1-4.3)
2. Continue on schedule with program reviews, refining assessment techniques, and continuing to clarify the practical evidence that would support whether student learning outcomes are achieved. (CFR 2.7)

3. Ensure that faculty and department chairs have sufficient training to fully develop a complete and robust assessment plan for SPSU. (CFR 3.4)

4. Review administrative, staff, and faculty positions to clarify roles and responsibilities and to ensure clear lines of authority and accountability. (CFRs 3.1, 3.2)

5. Strengthen the human resource function for administrative and staff positions by completing and publishing the updated staff handbook with subsequent follow-up to ensure that policies and procedures relating to hiring, orientation, training, grievances, performance reviews, job description updates, etc. are being consistently followed. (CFRs 1.3, 1.8, 3.1)

6. Strengthen the information technology infrastructure of SPSU to ensure that technical support, training, and administrative support systems better meet the financial, student, advancement, and personnel data needs of staff. (CFR 3.7)
Institution: St. Patrick’s Seminary and University

Date: 19-21 March 2014

Overview:
Under federal regulations, WASC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s credit hour policy and processes as well as the lengths of its programs.

Credit hour is defined by the Department of Education as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than—

(1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

(2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Program length may be seen as one of several measures of quality and as a proxy measure for scope of the objectives of degrees or credentials offered. Traditionally offered degree programs are generally approximately 120 semester credit hours for a bachelor’s degree, and 30 semester credit hours for a master's degree; there is greater variation at the doctoral level depending on the type of program. For programs offered in non-traditional formats, for which program length is not a relevant and/or reliable quality measure, reviewers should ensure that available information clearly defines desired program outcomes and graduation requirements, that institutions are ensuring that program outcomes are achieved, and that there is a reasonable correlation between the scope of these outcomes and requirements and those typically found in traditionally offered degrees or programs tied to program length.

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings, Commendations, and Recommendations section of the team report.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the Comments sections as appropriate.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Policy on credit hour**                            | Is this policy easily accessible? X YES ☐ NO  
Where is the policy located? The policy is in the course catalog, on the website, and is stated in each and every syllabus.  
Comments: SPSU completed a complete credit hour policy review and syllabus review since the CPR visit. |
| **Process(es)/periodic review of credit hour**       | Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)? X YES ☐ NO  
Program Review is the procedure in place for periodic review of credit hour assignments; however, faculty have worked together to revise syllabi to better reflect time spent in engaged learning in each course in a way that will let them review time spent on course elements each semester the course is taught.  
Does the institution adhere to this procedure? X YES ☐ NO  
Comments: Some exemplary syllabi include a table of actual engaged minutes expected for various assignments and course elements. |
| **Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet** | Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours? X YES ☐ NO  
Comments: |
| **Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses** | How many syllabi were reviewed? NA  
What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? NA  
What degree level(s)? NA  
What discipline(s)? NA  
Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? YES ☐ NO  
Comments: There are no hybrid or online courses offered. |
| **Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)** | How many syllabi were reviewed?  
What kinds of courses?  
What degree level(s)?  
What discipline(s)?  
Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded? ☐ YES ☐ NO  
Comments: An extensive review of the credit hours awarded for the Pastoral Year Program was completed just after the CPR visit and approved by faculty vote. Although there appears to be no syllabus for this program, it is clear that students are more than meeting requisite numbers of hours for the credits awarded. |
| **Sample program information (catalog, website, or other program materials)** | How many programs were reviewed? 3  
What kinds of programs were reviewed? MA Theology, BA Completion, M.Div/S.T.B.  
What degree level(s)? Master’s and Baccalaureate degree completion  
What discipline(s)? Theology/Divinity |
| Does this material show that the programs offered at the institution are of a generally acceptable length? | YES | NO |
| Comments: |

Review Completed by: DawnEllen Jacobs  
Date: 21 March 2014
**MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST**

Under federal regulation*, WASC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions and Comments: Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this table as appropriate.</th>
<th>Verified Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal regulations</strong></td>
<td>Does the institution follow federal regulations on recruiting students?</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  
  Comments:

  SPSU does not recruit students. All student applications come directly from bishops who select and pay for seminarians to attend SPSU.
  
  Non-seminarians can apply to attend SPSU in the MDiv or MA program but few non-seminarians participate in these programs. To be admitted, prospective applicants must meet ahead of time with the Dean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree completion and cost</th>
<th>Does the institution provide accurate information about the typical length of time to degree?</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution provide accurate information about the overall cost of the degree?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  
  Comments:

  Information on completion rates and length of time to degree is posted on the website at:
  
  http://www.stpatricksseminary.org/academic/educational-effectiveness-statement.html
  
  Per unit costs for non seminarians are listed on the website:
  
  http://www.stpatricksseminary.org/admissions/non-seminarian-students.html
  
  Costs for seminarians to attend SPSU are provided directly to the bishops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Careers and employment</th>
<th>Does the institution provide accurate information about the kinds of jobs for which its graduates are qualified, as applicable?</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution provide accurate information about the employment of its graduates, as applicable?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  
  Comments:

  SPSU prepares Catholic priests and graduates assume those positions. SPSU tracks its graduates’ parish assignments over time and uses the data internally to make programmatic improvements, as appropriate. Information on numbers ordained is available on the website at:
  
  http://www.stpatricksseminary.org/academic/educational-effectiveness-statement.html

*§602.16(a)(1)(vii)

**Section 487 (a)(20) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) prohibits Title IV eligible institutions from providing incentive compensation to employees or third party entities for their success in securing student enrollments. Incentive compensation includes commissions, bonus payments, merit salary adjustments, and promotion decisions based solely on success in enrolling students. These regulations do not apply to the recruitment of international students residing in foreign countries who are not eligible to receive Federal financial aid.

Review Completed By:  Bob Sorensen
Date: March 19, 2014

- 23 -
TRANSFER CREDIT REVIEW CHECKLIST
Under federal regulations*, WASC is required to demonstrate that it monitors the institution’s recruiting and admissions practices accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</th>
<th>Verified Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Credit Policy(s)</td>
<td>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for receiving transfer credit?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the policy publicly available? If so, where? Policy is located in the course catalog</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the policy(s) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education?</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: The policy states that credits will be accepted toward a degree at SPSU if the units come from another regionally accredited institution, are equivalent to courses offered by St. Patrick’s, and fulfill the expectations for intellectual formation as stipulated by the Program for Priestly Formation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*§602.24(e): Transfer of credit policies. The accrediting agency must confirm, as part of its review for renewal of accreditation, that the institution has transfer of credit policies that--

1. Are publicly disclosed in accordance with 668.43(a)(11); and

2. Include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education.

See also WASC Senior College and University Commission’s Transfer of Credit Policy.
Review Completed By: Riess Potterveld
Date: March 19, 2014
STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW – TEAM REPORT APPENDIX

Institution: St. Patrick’s Seminary and University
Date: 21 March 2014

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Reviewed</th>
<th>Questions/Comments (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)</th>
<th>Verified Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy on student complaints</td>
<td>Does the institution have a policy or formal procedure for student complaints?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the policy or procedure easily accessible? Where? Comments: Physical documents that include the policy are the faculty handbook and the “Rule of Life” Book 2 portion of the student handbook that is provided to every seminarian. The policy is also located on the website at <a href="http://www.stpatricksseminary.org/student-life/procedure-for-student-complaints.html">http://www.stpatricksseminary.org/student-life/procedure-for-student-complaints.html</a>.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process(es)/procedure</td>
<td>Does the institution have a procedure for addressing student complaints? Please describe briefly:</td>
<td>Yes, see attached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution adhere to this procedure?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: When prompted, the Dean of Men generally described the grievance procedures and these were consistent with the policy attached.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Records</td>
<td>Does the institution maintain records of student complaints? Where?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the institution have an effective way of tracking and monitoring student complaints over time? Please describe briefly:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments: The Dean of Men noted that student complaints are always located in the student’s individual record and file. This is the only location for complaints unless the issue was related to a diocesan dismissal, in which case the sponsoring diocese is sent a copy of the record. Issues of sexual misconduct are similarly forwarded to the Chancellor’s office within the SF Archdiocese. SPSU does not maintain a centralized record of all complaints nor does it aggregate complaint information into metrics that can be tracked over time or disaggregated by reason or outcome. Specifically, the Dean of Men desired to study time to resolution, which could be facilitated through a more central record-keeping process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.18 Student Academic Grievances
Valid student academic grievances regarding a faculty member include but are not limited to:
1. failure to provide a course syllabus and/or a written statement describing the course content and objectives, method of determining the final grades, office hours and any other specific information relevant to the course or method of evaluation within the first full week of classes;
2. failure to follow the syllabus and course description or to give adequate notice of changes in the planned conduct of the course;
3. consistent digression from the proper content of the course without sound academic reason and/or failure to cover the necessary content of the course;
4. failure to correlate instruction and examinations to the course content announced in the syllabus;
5. consistent failure to grade and return assignments in a timely fashion or with adequate explanation of the grade assigned;
6. failure to assign grades equitably;
7. failure to follow the announced grading policy;
8. consistent failure to be present and prepared for scheduled classes, to inform students of changes in the schedule or to provide alternative or substitute coverage for classes;
9. consistent failure to be available to students for office hours;
10. failure to protect the privacy of students or to respect the confidentiality to which they are entitled;
11. failure to abide by those SPSU policies that guarantee the orderly and equitable conduct of academic course work.

Students who consider that they have a valid grievance regarding a faculty member should seek initial resolution and redress of the grievance by bringing the matter to the attention of the following persons listed: first the faculty member concerned, then the advisor, and then the Academic Dean. Students who consider that approaching these persons has not achieved appropriate resolution and redress may follow the procedures outlined in the Rule of Life.

3.8.1 Policy on Respect of Persons
SPSU wants to uphold the dignity of persons in all aspects of its community life. To this end, we consider any attitudes, statements, or behaviors of a racial or sexual nature that offend the dignity of persons to be contrary to the style of life we are trying to foster within the community. Therefore, if any member of the SPSU community perceives another person, resident or visitor, to express offensive statements or behaviors, then he or she should first try to communicate directly to the offending person his or her disapproval and discomfort. If the offense is of a particularly serious nature, or if the offense persists, then the Dean of Men or the President/Rector should be informed.

3.8.2 Faculty-Student Relations
3.8.2.1 Respect of Persons and Professional Conduct
Open and adult relationships between faculty and students are encouraged. Should anyone believe that a faculty member is showing favoritism to some students, he is asked to share his concerns either with the Dean of Men or the President/Rector. Any faculty member accused of favoritism must be confronted with specific activity that is the basis of the charge, and the person making the accusation must be made known to the one being accused.

3.8.2.2 Ethical Standards for Treatment of Students
The following are some ethical standards that students can expect from SPSU Faculty.
1. To receive appropriate assessment of their educational and formational needs.
2. To receive a clear description regarding each SPSU official's responsibility. In particular, a clear delineation between the role of spiritual director (internal forum, strictly confidential) and the role of advisor (external forum, public as regards faculty evaluation).
3. To receive the highest level of competence and professionalism reasonably possible in regard to the dispensing of services.
4. To live in an environment free of sexual innuendo, inappropriate touching and inappropriate socializing at any time by faculty and professional staff.
5. To be informed in a timely and thorough manner about formation and evaluation criteria.
6. To receive timely and appropriate information regarding observed problems and formational concerns. Students should also receive timely and appropriate information regarding non-recommendation for continuance or dismissal.
7. To receive competent and confidential record-keeping, and minimal intrusion governing what information about the student may be communicated to outside parties, as framed by civil and canon law.

If a student feels the behavior of a faculty member has not been in accord with professional standards, he has a number of options:
1. First he should discuss the matter with his advisor. The advisor should ascertain the facts of the matter and, if possible, the complaint should be settled at that level.
2. If this procedure does not resolve the matter, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Dean of Men who will either address it personally or inform the Rector.
3. At any and all times student have the right, but not the duty, to bring any concerns directly to the attention of the Rector. This would include inappropriate behavior on the part of a Faculty member.
4. Should a student have ethical concerns about the President/Rector, these concerns should be brought to the attention of the Vice-Rector who would be responsible for informing both the Archbishop of San Francisco, who is the Chancellor of SPSU, and the Provincial of the Society of St. Sulpice.

Rev 9/2013