REPORT OF THE WSCUC VISITING TEAM SEEKING ACCREDITATION VISIT #2

For Institutions Seeking Initial Accreditation

Claremont Lincoln University

December 2-3, 2015

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The team evaluated the institution under the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective judgment 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 action letter will be made available to the public by publication on the WSCUC website once an institution has achieved Candidacy and throughout the process to achieve Initial Accreditation.
PREFACE
The following report represents the third review conducted by members of this team. Three of the members have been on all three of the visits and one member has been on the campus twice. The week prior to the visit the Team Chair (Dr. James Donahue) had an emergency and was not able to participate. The WSCUC Liaison contacted the Assistant Chair (Dr. Gary Miller) and asked him to lead the visit. Thus, this report represents the findings from a modified team but who also have great familiarity with Claremont Lincoln University.

SECTION I. OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Claremont Lincoln University was conceived in 2008 and officially founded in 2010. The university developed a clear mission to create innovative, transformative and accessible graduate education programs that are focused upon integrative knowledge and skills for positive social change. The university’s mission statement embodies a unique approach to learning in an effort to develop collaborative leaders across “cultural, ideological, religious, and economic perspectives.”

Three degree programs are offered, all at the Master level:
- Master of Arts in Ethical Leadership
- Master of Arts in Interfaith Action
- Master of Arts in Social Impact

In addition to these programs of study, Claremont Lincoln University (CLU) also requires students to participate in a unique set of courses entitled the Claremont Core:
- Mindfulness
- Dialogue
- Collaboration
- Change

All courses are offered in an online format although students are invited to come to campus for periodic Gathering Weekends. These weekends involve co-curricular, collegial and social activities. Many students from the online program attend these special weekends and interact with special speakers, attend workshops, and participate in social events. Some of the activities are broadcast live and archived online.

There are currently (as of 12/03/15) 70 students enrolled in the three degree programs. CLU has five full-time faculty, a pool of teaching (part-time) faculty and 25 regular employees (most are administration and staff). Upon conclusion of the October 2015 term (December 19, 2015) a total of 42 students had completed their program of study at CLU, including students from all three programs.

The current WSCUC team previously visited the campus in December 2014 and presented their report to the Commission. Based upon the Commission decision to extend Candidacy and require an additional visit, the team was reformulated to conduct this visit as a follow-up to recommendations from the previous Team Report and Commission concerns.
ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

Claremont University took the Commission Action Letter and the Team Report very seriously as they created highly structured plans for addressing the various issues. The university developed “Special Visit Teams” to plan, assess and prepare their report. These teams represented a broad constituency of the campus community. The Board of Directors also provided oversight for the report. It appears that all campus members were actively engaged in the process with a sincere desire to learn, grow, and accurately represent institutional improvement.

STANDARD 2
CURRICULUM DESIGN, ALIGNMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES, RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Claremont Lincoln University has developed a unique method of curriculum design for online graduate education. Their team approach utilizes subject matter experts, scholars, practitioners, and current faculty to create, assess and implement each course. The desire is to ensure relevancy and effectiveness for students and future graduates. Three review phases are utilized:

- Strategic – every 2-4 years
- Annual Review
- Course Review – twice each year

These reviews are different from the normal program review process that usually occurs every 3-5 years. Each review is focused upon continuous improvement and self-reflection, cornerstones for the entire CLU educational process. Thus, when CLU indicates that the first comprehensive program review for the MEL program will take place in 2017, it appears that the program has actually been reviewed several times over the initial four year period of implementation.

As noted in the Team Report of Dec 2014 and commended in the Commission Letter of March 2015, CLU’s approach to curriculum development—The Curriculum Labs—has had another year to mature and CLU has leveraged that time to their advantage. CLU has expanded the labs to include input from business, non-profit, and community practitioners into courses. This has the effect of enlarging the resource pool in curriculum development and revision (CFR 2.4).

In an effort to improve the alignment of student learning outcomes (SLO) the university has taken several actions:

- Refinement of Institutional Learning Outcomes
- Clearer alignment via curriculum mapping
- Refinement of course outcome measures
- Refined Capstone course and Capstone Action Projects (CFR 2.2b)

To ensure that the standards of the courses and programs were consistent with graduate-level education, the university utilized the Lumina Degree Qualification
Profile (DQP). Based upon a thorough review it was determined that each program has achieved the standards according to DQP guidelines (CFR 2.1).

The 2014 WSCUC Team indicated that a clear link between research/scholarly skills and course assignments were not adequately expressed. CLU has affirmed that the three degree programs are practitioner-based, thus a unique set of research skills have been created to measure student success. A thorough review of courses was conducted by CLU and several modifications/clarifications have been instituted. For example, more specific student learning outcomes/objectives have been created and Capstone courses have been modified. Exhibits were provided of actual student Capstone Action Projects that clearly support the improvement. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 4.5)

In addition, six principles were created for the Capstone Action Project to guide students through the process:
1. The project is driven by the focus of "What question do you want to answer?"
2. The project is limited to one topic, narrowly defined.
3. The project topic is germane to the field(s) of ethical leadership, interfaith action or social impact.
4. The project must include collaboration with others.
5. The project must include data collection and analysis.
6. The project must be a hands-on project in an appropriate organizational setting.

A unique aspect to student success for this culminating project is the process utilized to guide the students throughout their entire program. This is accomplished through the accumulation of end-of-course portfolios that support the final CAP. Timelines are provided for each student as they progress through the academic portion of the program, thus holding them accountable for keeping a focus upon the CAP even though they may be in the early stages of the program (CFRs 2.2b, 2.8).

During the last year CLU reformulated the Capstone Action Projects in their three masters programs to reflect a level of research and critical thinking skills commensurate with a graduate program. The course syllabi have been strengthened in terms of alignment with the Claremont Core, which is the center and guiding educational and philosophical foundation for the institution. The recent hiring of a Capstone Project Coordinator to guide students through the process is also a positive step (CFR 2.2b). CLU has also developed an e-portfolio system where student artifacts are posted in a manner that all of the PLO and individual course SLO are matched in an easily accessible. In the last year several Capstone Action Projects had been completed and were available for review. The team was impressed with the overall quality of the work. There still remains some work to do in standardization of requirements for the Capstone in terms of length, style, etc., in the different degree programs; however, the coordinator position should be able to alleviate those issues.
Fiscal, Physical, and Information Resources
At the time of the Special Visit, the institution had three years of audited financial statements, and has demonstrated a positive net asset increase during each of the those prior years. Therefore, the Team believes that the institution now is fully in compliance with the guideline found for CFR 3.4, requiring three years of positive net asset increases. The net asset increase for June 30, 2013, 2014, and 2015 was $2,243,492, $1,584,531, and, $876,692, respectively. As noted in previous reports, a significant portion of the institution’s revenues was derived from contributions, 92% in 2013, 88% in 2014, and 100% in 2015. Through the period ending June 30, 2015 the majority of the contribution revenues are highly concentrated from a few parties, 73% from 3 parties in FY 2013, and 96% and 99%, from two parties in 2015 and 2014, respectively. As reported earlier, most of the contribution revenues are from the $50,000,000 revocable pledge, which has been delivered in varying amounts annually over the past several years. Since the last visit, the founding donor, David Lincoln has created an irrevocable pledge to cover any operational deficit through the year 2020 (CFR 3.4). Therefore in the Visiting Team’s opinion the institution does not run the risk of faltering financially for the next six years, should the institution be granted initial accreditation.

One of the institution’s strategic goals is to diversify its revenue sources in order to become self-sustaining by the conclusion of FY 2019. As a result a revenue diversification goal is included in its strategic plan. This goal, entitled, “Grow and Diversify Our Resource Base”, is carefully described in both written and financial terms in the strategic plan document. This goal requires enrollment growth in its master’s level programs, a rapid and aggressive increase in certificate programs and a substantial increase in gifts from non-Lincoln related sources. For example, in order to become self-sustaining by FY 2019 the institution plans to increase program revenues, tuition and certificate revenues, to 55% of its total unrestricted revenue, thus reducing its reliance on contributions to 45%. This requires significant growth in program revenues, from its June 30, 2015 net tuition level of just over $1,000 to $5.7M, an extremely aggressive increase. At the time of the visit only two pilot certificate programs had been launched, with limited financial results; however, the pilots supplied important feedback for the programs and will assist the University in attaining financial sustainability in the future. The effort required to expand these two types of revenues to the degree forecasted will be challenging (CFR 3.4).

Sustainability and Revenue Diversification: The institution currently relies extensively on the founding gift from David Lincoln. For example, in FY14 and FY 15 his contributions provided the vast majority of total revenues, but for FY16 the total Lincoln gifts will begin to be reduced as a percentage of the total
contributions. The following table illustrates the institution’s goal for revenue diversification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Type</th>
<th>FY15*</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Tuition Revenue</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate Revenue</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Program</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lincoln Related</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total contribution</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The fiscal year will change from June 30, to December 31, at the conclusion of 2015.

In order to accomplish these goals, the number of enrolled students must increase dramatically during the five years included in the plan. The following table illustrates the growth required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>FY19</th>
<th>FY20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% increase (year over year)</td>
<td>Projected</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>316%</td>
<td>172%</td>
<td>118%</td>
<td>108%</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tuition forecast goals were established by making extrapolations of existing enrollment patterns to date, and projecting similar patterns, given increased marketing expenditures and the awarding of WSCUC accreditation. The President and other senior level administrators expressed confidence that the projected enrollment growth will happen. Her confidence is based upon market research and the enrollment successes to date. For example, even without initial accreditation the institution surpassed its enrollment targets for the last two terms starts by achieving an enrollment of 70 by the last term in 2015 rather than the 51 that had been projected. One of the major assumptions driving their enrollment projections is the assumption that yield rates will remain stable, even though the tuition discount rate will be reduced from nearly 100% to 10%. While no evidence exists that the yield rate will remain the same, the 10% anticipated yield rate is slightly below the national average for master’s degree programs, and is reasonably achievable. In addition, the institution has committed to maintain a continuing advertising allocation into the future and should continue to drive enrollment growth into the future. The Visiting Team recommends that the institution carefully manage all enrollment operations in order to achieve the aggressive growth that is required to meet the goals of the strategic financial plan (CFR 3.4).

The deployment of certificate programs is also an essential element of the strategic financial plan. At the time of the last visit the certificate program was largely a strategic direction. Since that time three key activities have occurred:
• Hired a new program director;
• Created a conceptual framework;
• Launched two pilot delivery projects.

The conceptual model for delivery of the certificate program is comprised of three elements: 1) a purely on-line general certificate module that will be available for a small fee, and offered in an interactive, on-line format; 2) a professional program of 45 instruction hours for specific industries and needs; 3) an academic certificate program of 9 credit hours similar to the professional program, but with academic credit. The content of these programs are derived from the current program learning outcomes already developed for the academic programs and will be deployed on a low-cost basis. The efforts to develop this conceptual plan included a significant amount of research into both what prospective client organizations need, and what types of programs are already deployed by others. The two pilot projects have also assisted in the refinement of the plan for the on-line general and professional certificate programs. In addition, the pilots have provided a number of important leads and contacts for future growth. Taken together, these efforts have helped create a much clearer forward path. However, to date, no on-line program has been deployed and therefore the Visiting Team recommends that the institution complete this worthwhile and important project in order to both fulfill the institutional mission and to create additional, non-gift income revenues that is an essential part of the strategic financial plan (CFR 3.4).

The fundraising goals of the institution continue to be ambitious and increased fundraising from non-Lincoln sources is needed as the founding gift will not fully support the institution after 2020. In order to achieve these goals the institution has now employed two additional senior fundraising staff and is reviewing its fundraising data system in order to most effectively create a high powered fundraising system. It is clear that the institution has created the necessary infrastructure to establish an effective fundraising organization, in order to achieve its fundraising goals. The institution believes that its aggressive goals are achievable because of the attractiveness of the university mission, the cadre of experienced fundraisers, the stated support of the institution from gift giving foundations once it achieves initial accreditation, and the institutions well-connected and affluent friends and board members. Another improvement since the last visit is the newly formulated committee of the Board of Trustees that has been established to review and promote fund raising plans and operations. One of the institutional goals is to find a permanent home in Claremont for the university. This is now closer to reality, as several properties are under consideration and the founding donor has agreed to a new gift to cover the cost of the land. This will then require a capital fund raising effort to build the new structures to house the institution. Moreover, the Visiting Team observed that goals of the strategic financial plan require substantial increases in non-Lincoln contribution revenues, therefore the Visiting Team recommends that the institution focus fundraising efforts on raising the unrestricted and restricted gifts described in the strategic financial plan (CFR 3.4).
Following the 2014 visit, the site visit team noted that “Given its projected rapid growth, multiple degree programs, and especially its multiple admissions entry, CLU has an obvious need for a very robust and effective program of institutional research (CFR 4.5).” Based on the Team Report of the 2014 site visit Team, the WASC Commission observed in its action letter of March 20, 2015 that an important area for continued attention was developing “shovel-ready” assessment instruments in place to gain necessary data (CFR 4.4), analyze it through the collective work of the assessment team (CFR 4.5), and respond to a changing higher education environment (CFR 4.7).

To develop and implement an effective program of institutional research, CLU has put in place an effective personnel structure and assessment systems. CLU’s Director of Institutional Research, a cadre of assessment managers and the decision makers for three clusters of assessment (Executive, Learning, and Operations), ensure that relevant institutional research data is collected and analyzed, and that the appropriate decisions are made based on the collected actionable data. The Director of Institutional Research is the lead institutional researcher and reports to the Executive Vice President of Operations/CIO. She works closely with the assessment managers, Director of Curriculum Development, and faculty members. Based on the site visit Team report of Fall 2014 and the Commission Action Letter of March 20, 2015 that CLU clarify its management of the program review process, CLU has now put in place direct and indirect assessment process structure and protocols that clearly delineate the lines of authority and responsibility in the management of the program review and assessment processes. The following graphical representation from CLU’s Exhibit 43: “Learning Outcome Assessment Protocols” describes the assessment protocol structure and respective roles of the academic and administrative personnel:
The Office of Institutional Research has created a number of standard reports drawn from various data points that enable administrators and faculty to track information such as class size, cohort progress, retention and graduation rates. The institutional researcher(s) disseminates data based on the institutional assessment flow chart: Weekly Institutional Wide Dashboards, Quarterly Team Assessment Report, Annual Reviews, and Comprehensive Program Reviews, and upon request in support of university assessment, planning, and decision-making processes. Based on the institution-wide dashboard reports and quarterly term assessment reports, program directors and management teams can access enrollment reports to assist in budget planning and student success.

CLU has developed a set of key performance indicators, including data on enrollments, graduation and retention rates (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and academic program), operating resources, alumni participation, and giving. CLU has developed and implemented a comprehensive Annual Standards of Practice Self-Assessment Checklist that it follows in asking the IR questions to collect relevant data, score those data, supporting documents, and the staff who are responsible for collecting and analyzing those data. Based on document reviews and CLU’s Self-Study Report findings and evidentiary exhibits, the team notes that the University is successfully integrating the use of key performance
indicators into assessment and decision-making related to capacity and educational effectiveness (CFR 1.2, 4.1-4.5).

CLU has made considerable progress since the Fall 2014 Visit in fortifying its systems for assessment (CFR 2.10, 4.4-4.5) and conducting initial rounds of program-level assessment in each department. To supplement direct assessment of learning outcomes as evidenced in Exhibit 40: “Benchmarks,” CLU has benchmarked itself against other institutions, e.g. Chapman, Azusa Pacific, Laverne, CalState Dominguez-Hills, Saint Mary’s, American Jewish University, Vanguard, GTU, and Antioch. This benchmarking provides CLU with valuable and relevant indirect, nationally-normed survey data (National Association of Graduate Schools) on time-to-degree, number of credit hours required for graduation, retention and graduation rates, and program cost.

It is clear that CLU generates a considerable amount of data on its performance at various levels (institutional, program, and course) and that the decentralized IR functions as managed by the Director of Institutional Research and assessment managers provide a robust framework for evidence-based decision-making (CFR 4.3-4.5).

Since the last visit, CLU has also made considerable progress in developing student learning outcomes and assessing them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intended Outcomes</th>
<th>Evidence of CLU’s Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop data to measure the curricular/co-curricular success of students</td>
<td>- Improved systems for direct assessment of student work at the program level, including assessment plans and rubric development in all departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recent rounds of annual assessment in all programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate skills on entry, at mid-course and at graduation</td>
<td>- Development of assessment plans in all programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Analysis of performance in capstone projects/final portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify comparative success data</td>
<td>- Benchmarked data against like-minded institutions, e.g. Chapman, Azusa Pacific, Laverne, CalState Dominguez-Hills, Saint Mary’s, American Jewish University, Vanguard, GTU, and Antioch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Alumni employment rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine methods of measuring alumni success</td>
<td>- CLU is developing methods of measurement of alumni success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop alumni tracking systems</td>
<td>- Alumni are currently tracked using CAMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey employers</td>
<td>- No plan in place at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement holistic model of student success</td>
<td>- CLU’s extensive planning to substantially implement its Annual Review program in 2014-2015 academic year, and the actionable quarterly team assessment reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The embedding of the 4 CLU principles in its program curricula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hiring of the Director Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clearly delineated outcomes and assessment systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CLU's goals and achievements provide evidence of educational effectiveness under Standards 2 and 4:

- Developing systems of direct assessment of student learning, including co-curricular assessment particularly as it is related to the 4 Principles (Mindfulness, Dialogue, Collaboration, Change)
- Assessing the effectiveness of institutional learning outcomes (the 4 Principles) across programs
- Seeking higher quality indirect evidence about the student experience, for decision-making

**Holistic Approach to Student Success.** At CLU, a good deal of individualized attention to student success is evident from intake to graduation and beyond. For example, CLU uses the Quarterly Assessment Data to identify risk factors for students and follows up on this information through the efforts of the Director of IR and the Director of Student Services (CFR 2.10, 2.13). Through the Office of the Director of Community Engagement and through the Office of the Executive Vice President for Institutional Advancement, CLU plans to collect data on internship experiences, employment status, time to employment in the field, typical positions and salary ranges, and key resources that recent graduates used in their job searches.

The team commends CLU for its culture of personalized commitment to student success; the family atmosphere it has succeeded in creating is remarkable considering that the University is largely an online and at-a-distance endeavor. The purposive mission of CLU as gleaned through the completed Capstone Projects and the Gathering Weekends also contribute to the feeling of belonging that encourages students to engage and persist.

It is clear that CLU's goals for student success—expressed in the program learning outcomes and the integration of the Claremont Core: Mindfulness, Dialogue, Collaboration, and Change—have been shaped by its mission and guiding principles (CFR 1.1-1.3, 2.2-2.3, 2.6). The four principles are now integrated with the Capstone Action Projects.

In order to assess the extent to which students are actually achieving the 4 Principles, CLU will need to ensure that each of the outcomes relating to these principles is worded in a measurable way so that it will be clear how students’ personal and ethical development might be evaluated across the curriculum and co-curriculum (CFR 1.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.11. 4.4, 4.6). It will also be essential for faculty who are responsible for delivering the curriculum and the co-curriculum to work closely together as academic partners in this effort to ensure and assess student progress on achieving the 4 Principles (CFR 2.2a, 2.11).

**Exhibits of Assessment Systems and Findings.** In preparation of the special site visit, CLU mounted a remarkable campus-wide effort to display the evidence of student learning, including samples of actual student work, assessment
findings, and displays of program student learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and rubrics used to assess student progress at the assignment/course level as well as at the midpoint and end of the programs. CLU is to be commended for so effectively externalizing the evidence of its quality assurance systems. The display of assessment tools, student work samples and findings to date could be described as a highly engaging way to examine evidence of capacity and educational effectiveness. (CFR 2.3-2.7, 2.11, 4.4, 4.6-4.8).

Though relatively new in most departments, there was evidence of annual assessment activities in all departments and programs.

**Use of Assessment Results.** The team was satisfied that CLU routinely engages in frequent review of actual student work. Although the annual assessment process is still new for most departments due to the newness of the institution itself, the self-study report and exhibits provided examples of each department having used assessment results to make deliberate curricular improvements. The assessment exhibits presented in the self-study detailed both strengths and weaknesses in student performance in each department, presenting persuasive evidence of students achieving intended outcomes at levels acceptable to the institution. Where student achievement was not as high as expected, CLU presented evidence recommending and implementing actions for improvement mainly through its quarterly assessment and annual review processes. A number of these actions involved consultation across the relevant departments, indicating that CLU takes a well-integrated approach to student success.

CLU provided clear examples of how faculty have used such feedback to improve, most commonly through curricular adjustments (CFR 2.4, 2.6-2.7, 4.1, 4.6-4.8).

**Evaluation of assessment systems.** CLU’s system of evaluating capacity and educational effectiveness employs both direct and indirect measures. With regard to the educational evaluation assessment system, CLU has deployed Evaluation Kit software and integrated it with its Canvas Online Learning Management System for online classes. CLU has made impressive strides over the last year in establishing more robust systems for direct assessment of student work. CLU’s progress in developing program learning outcomes in all departments has been remarkable; all departments now have lists of outcomes and two programs need to integrate institutional outcomes with program and course outcomes.

The quality of assessment efforts is aided by CLU’s implementation of the Grader Reliability Check. The team used the WASC rubrics to analyze the quality of program learning outcomes and the degree to which portfolios (used in the design departments) and capstones (mandatory in every department) are used to assess program outcomes.

CLU’s overall system of quality assurance consists of:

1. Using the quarterly assessment reports to identify general and particular risk factors and needs among the new and existing
students, with follow-up recommendations for individualized support through the Office of Student Services.

2. The alignment of program curricula with intended program learning outcomes in all academic programs.

3. The use of rubrics to communicate key criteria and expected levels of achievement to students.

4. Frequent formative feedback on student work in classes and also at the program level, including review of student work at the midpoint and conclusion of their program.

5. Direct, summative assessment through capstone classes in all departments.

6. Annual assessment activities in each program.

7. Frequent public review of student work in most departments by both internal and external stakeholders, particularly, external representatives, to ensure that student work consistently reflects the level and quality identified in its educational objectives.

8. Collection of indirect evidence such as comparative data from other institutions; student course evaluations.


CLU has persuasively documented these systems for the site visit team.

**STANDARD 4, PART 2**

**PROGRAM REVIEW**

In preparing for this visit CLU demonstrated their typical zeal in hiring quality personnel, collaborating, refining, systems and just general hard work. They took the Team Report of 2014 and the Commission Letter of March 2015 seriously and focused on the points of weaknesses that were noted. The activity could almost be termed frenetic.

As the team noted last year the available data for program reviews were limited by the newness of their three-degree programs and the lack of graduates. Since that visit there have been additional graduates, and while the sample size remains relatively small, the results of their work, particularly the capstone action projects are encouraging.

The Team noted last December, which was echoed by the Commission Letter that, “Given its projected rapid growth, multiple degree programs, and especially its multiple admissions entry, CLU has an obvious need for a very robust and effective program of institutional research (CFR 4.5).” In response to the 2013 WASC Site Team Visit Report, CLU hired a very capable Director of Institutional Research, but has also ingrained a detailed, thorough, and ongoing five-step approach to Program Review.

- Institution-wide Dashboards: Provides for constant “red flag” alerts when data indicates any area requiring attention.
- Quarterly Team Reports: Assessment Team meetings to review numerous data sets and analyses.
- Curriculum Lab and Curriculum Review. This brings all of the stakeholders together to review the curriculum with an eye towards external professional practice.

- Annual Reviews: Consisting of four main reports, including the Annual Program Review of the Claremont Core, the signature *raisons d’être* of CLU.

- Comprehensive Program Review of the Three Master’s Programs done every four years.

CLU has also identified three more unconventional approaches to their institutional review processes:

- Hackathon events, a gathering of experts in various and sometimes-unrelated fields to “hack” new solutions and concepts to address needs in the IT industry, are the model for the Curriculum Lab/Review process.

- Gamification (use of game thinking in non-game contexts) in the “Edutainment” industry is applied in the Certificate Programs and will be expanded to MA programs.

- “Moneyball” (in the nonfiction book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*, financial journalist Michael Lewis documented how the Oakland Athletics baseball team focused on an analytical, evidence-based, approach to decision making) concepts are used in hiring—that is, we look beyond an individual’s single degree or title to imagine how they can work with the organization as a team.

CLU certainly has proven itself agile and innovative. It is possible that CLU has responded “too vigorously” to the previous comments by the Team and Commission. The regular four year cycle program review seem well conceived, structured, and CLU (especially as graduates grow in number and enrollment increases) has an effective system in place of institutional research; it is possible that the ongoing and regular review of the curriculum at this early stage could also have deleterious affects. First of all, with the newness of the institution and the programs it may be better to have a solid and consistent run of one to three years with the curriculum in place so both the faculty and the students can get a good feel for it and respond in their evaluations in a more holistic manner. From the evidence it seems certain that no two cohorts in any program have thus far matriculated through with the same material. With these regular reviews (and obvious changes) is there sufficient data to identify great or not so great aspects in the curriculum? It seems there is just as much chance as potentially good concepts being discarded as potentially bad ones. There are also ongoing challenges of “review fatigue” on the part of the faculty, administration, and support staff. The Quarterly Reports that were included in the exhibits (Exhibit 41 and 42) were thorough, well presented, and lengthy; so much so that the team wonders if this practice on a quarterly basis is a sustainable practice. Even the process for review includes eight separate steps/groups (Self-Study, p. 43) some of which are possibly overlapping. CLU will need to be mindful going forward of “assessment fatigue” (CFR 4.5, 4.6, 4.7).
The Commission expressed a concern about appropriate benchmark data for CLU’s programs (CFR 4.5). CLU admits that given the nature of its programs obtaining benchmark data has been a challenge. They stated: “CLU is developing a list of peer institutions by which CLU can benchmark outcomes against a consistent set of educational institutions. Although CLU is unique in terms of its mission, offerings, level, and modality, we have established three criteria: content related, masters level, and online only delivery.” CLU has been diligent in evaluating comparable institutions and programs in creating benchmarks for their future program reviews (CFR 4.7).

In the rather remarkable progress that CLU has made in less than a year they clearly have methods and personnel in place and a “shovel ready” system of assessment clearly exists (CFR 4.4) and thus far the resulting data and material has been used effectively through collective teamwork (CFR 4.5). The Director of Institutional Research position has provided a central focal point for the collection and dissemination of information. Their quarterly term reports (CLU Exhibits 41 & 42) are models of high quality accessible data that can be used in all departments of the institution.

CLU has acted to put into place a systematic method of data collection and program review (including regular curriculum review). The hiring of a Capstone Project Coordinator is a positive step, provided that person engages the faculty in collective evaluations of the finished projects (Commission Letter, p. 4, parentheses 3). The newness of the efforts are perhaps at this point leading to more work than is perhaps necessary, but the effort, data, and willingness to make data-driven decisions are clearly in place and the evidence from their early reports is very encouraging. The creation of a robust e-portfolio aligned with reformulated Capstone projects in their three master degree programs.

**COMMENDATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Commendations
The Site Visit Team commends Claremont Lincoln University for:

1. Their exceptional effort and the quality of the evidence provided to address the issues identified by the Commission and previous Team Report.
2. Leveraging the past year to great institutional advantage in furthering the maturation and expansion of the institution.
3. Creating a new revenue stream through the certificate programs that are also inextricably linked to the institutional mission and vision.
4. Advancing the Institutional Research structure and the integration of software packages to gather, analyze and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate educational effectiveness.
5. The development of e-portfolios and the reformulated Capstone Action Projects to reflect a more rigorous research environment for faculty and students.
Recommendations
The Site Visit Team further recommends that Claremont Lincoln University:

1. Focus fundraising efforts on raising the unrestricted and restricted gifts described in the strategic financial plan.
2. Finalize and deploy the certificate programs in order to meet the goals described in the strategic financial plan.
3. Achieve the aggressive institutional enrollment goals by carefully managing all aspects of enrollment operations.
4. Be careful to avoid assessment fatigue in planning and program improvement while appreciating the complex and multiple forms of assessment that have already been achieved.
5. Accelerate its plans for expanding accessibility to the Capstone Action Projects and the activities of the planned Centers in view of the potential for additional research and broader community value.

The first three recommendations represent areas of focus that directly relate to WSCUC Standards and are already part of CLU’s strategic efforts to fully realize its mission. The last two recommendations are based on observations by the Team and should be regarded as suggestions for improvement that will add deeper value to further the mission of Claremont Lincoln University.

The WSCUC Team that conducted the third site visit at Claremont Lincoln University has found sufficient evidence to recommend that the institution be granted initial accreditation.