

ASSURANCE SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Winona, MN

March 19, 2012 – March 21, 2012

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Winona State University. In addition, the institution submitted a Substantive Change Application for addition of a Doctoral Degree in Nursing Practice Program.

B. Organizational Context

Established in 1858 by the Minnesota legislature, Winona State University is the oldest higher education institution in Minnesota and the first state-supported normal school west of the Mississippi River. The institution enrolls nearly 8,900 students and offers coursework in more than 80 disciplines. Nearly 400 faculty members on two campuses, one in Winona and one in Rochester, are employed to deliver course instruction. The Rochester campus was established in 1917 and a permanent campus was created in 1979. The main campus is located in the Upper Mississippi River Valley in the City of Winona. It should be noted that WSU Rochester campus shares space with the Rochester Community and Technical College (RCTC). The site offers a variety of baccalaureate, post baccalaureate, and graduate programs to meet the needs of predominantly adult learners.

C. Unique Aspects of Visit

Dr. Rita Cheng, Chancellor of Southern Illinois University, was scheduled to be a Consultant Evaluator on the site visit team. Due to some unexpected developments, Dr. Cheng was unable to participate in the visit.

D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited

Winona State University - Rochester Campus

E. Distance Education Reviewed

Winona State University is currently using distance learning platforms to deliver some of its courses. At the present time none of the degree programs offered by the institution have more than 50% of the curriculum delivered online, including the proposed Doctoral Program in Nursing Practice.

F. Interactions with Constituencies

Chairman, Board of Trustees, Minnesota System of Colleges and Universities

Management

President, Winona State University

President, Winona State University Foundation

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Winona State University

Vice President for Advancement
Vice President for Student Life and Development
Associate Vice President/CIO, Information Technology Services
Interim Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services
Dean, College of Business
Dean, College of Education
Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Dean, College of Science and Engineering
Dean of Library
Dean of Students
Director, Affirmative Action/Legal Affairs

Faculty/Staff/Students

IFO Faculty Meeting on Assessment (approximately 10)
Center for Engaged Teaching Faculty (4)
Criterion 3 and 4 Committees (approximately 7)
Criterion 5 Committee (5)
Coordinator of Tutoring Services
Current and recently graduated MSN & DNP students (6)
Learning Systems and Services Coordinator, Teaching, Learning & Technology Services
Business Solutions Coordinator, Outreach & Continuing Education
Department Chairs (approximately 20)
Director of Admissions
Director of Advising & Career Services
Director of Financial Aid
Director of Grants and Sponsored Projects
Director of Career Services
Director of Counseling & Wellness
Director of Disability Services
Director of Health and Wellness Services
Director of Housing and Residence Life
Director of Inclusion and Diversity
Director, Marketing
Director, Student Union & Student Activities
Director, Educational Improvement and Leadership
Director, International Programs
Director, Institutional Planning, Assessment & Research
Director, Outreach & Continuing Education
Director, University Center Rochester
Director, Grants, Sponsored Projects, Human Subjects
Director, Teaching, Learning & Technology Services
Distance Learning/Quality Matters Group
Executive Director, Family Services Rochester
Executive Director, Diversity Council
Registrar
DNP Faculty
Faculty (two open faculty sessions, approximately 12)

General Education Committee
 Information Technology Specialist
 Manager, Diversity Council, Adult Ed. Program
 Organized Labor Leadership (IFO, ASF, AFSCME, MAPE, three meetings)
 Program Coordinator, Outreach & Continuing Education
 Program Coordinator, Residential College
 Staff (two open staff sessions, approximately 20)
 Strategic Planning Committee
 Student Senate Leader (5)
 Students (two open student sessions, approximately 62)

Community Members/Partners

President, Rochester Community and Technical College
 Assistant Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement, University of Minnesota Rochester
 COO and Owner, Winona Radio
 County Administrator, Winona County
 Director, Big Brothers, Big Sisters
 Director, of Field Operations-Claims
 Director, Park & Recreation Department
 Director of Education Services, SE Service Cooperative
 Director of Organizational Impact, Boys & Girls Club
 Director of Community Service, Rochester Public Schools
 Editor, Winona Daily News
 Education Workforce Manager Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
 Executive Director, Winona County Historical Society
 Executive Director, Project FINE
 Interim Director, Women's Resource Center
 Mayor, City of Winona
 Mentorship Coordinator, Ben Miller Academic Mentoring
 President, Winona Daily News
 President, Winona Agency (WSU Foundation Board Member)
 President and CEO, Winona
 Program Manager, Hawthorne Education Center
 Residential Manager, Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center
 Superintendent, Winona County Schools
 Superintendent, LaCrescent-Hokah Schools
 Vice President, Fastenal Corporation (WSU Foundation Board Member)
 Mayo Clinic Representative
 University of MN Extension Representative
 Director of the Master Nurse Anesthesia Program, School of Health Sciences, Mayo Clinic

G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

1. Self Study Report 2012
2. Appendices to the Self Study Report 2012
3. HLC 2003 Progress Report on Fiscal Auditing
4. AACSB -- Team Visit Report
5. AACSB review materials including resumes and program review

6. Academic Integrity Policy
7. Academic Standing Policy (Revised 2012)
8. Academic Themed Housing
9. Admissions web page
10. Advising Services web page
11. Advisor Handbook
12. AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees)/Council 5, AFL (American Federation of Labor)-CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) contract
13. Alcohol and other Drug Policies
14. Annual Financial Audit 2009 and 2010
15. Assessment Grant Reports (2010)
16. Athletic Training Student Assessment from Assessment Day 2012
17. Audit of Portal Pages
18. Audit of ASF Portal Pages
19. Audited Financial Statements
20. Audit Report to MnSCU FY2010
21. Board of Teaching -- Institutional Report and Exhibits (this included a number of syllabi and vitae for education)
22. Campus Comprehensive Plan (2010)
23. Campus Crime Act web page
24. Campus Self-Study Survey Results
25. Campus Self-Study Survey: Summary of Key Results
26. Career Guide
27. Career Services web page
28. Clinical Coordinator Partnership Brochures
29. Cohort Default Rate for FY 2008, 2007, and 2006
30. Collective Bargaining Agreements
31. College of Business's ETS results
32. College of Education's Single Assessment Institution-Level Pass Rate Data
33. Collegiate Learning Assessment 2005 Report
34. Community Connect Website
35. Community Liaison web page
36. Compendium Clinical Capstone Projects, Volumes I, II, & III
37. COS Program reviews (selected)
38. Counseling web page
39. Departmental HLC Portal Pages
40. Designing the Future: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Strategic Plan 2010-2014
41. Disability Services Student Guides
42. Disability Services Faculty Handbook
43. e-Warrior Digital Life and Learning Program Assessment Plan
44. e-Warrior web page
45. Extension Task Force Report & Recommendations 2010 and 2011
46. Faculty Handbook web page
47. Financial Aid web page
48. Graduate Catalog 2008-2010
49. Hazing Policy
50. Health Force Minnesota Annual Report 2012
51. Health Service web page

52. HLC 2001 Visit Report Advancement Section
53. HLC 2001 Visit Report Assurance Section
54. HLC Credits and Program Length for Institutions Worksheet
55. HLC Steering Committee Minutes
56. Housing and Residence Handbook
57. IFO Master Contract
58. IT Master Plan
59. Inclusion and Diversity web page
60. International Student Enrollment (countries represented)
61. LEAD – Advancing, Developing, and Emerging Warriors survey results, Spring 2011
62. Living History Project
63. Minimum Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients
64. Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) contract
65. Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) contract
66. MnSCU Board Policies and Procedures
67. National Association of Schools of Music 2011 review
68. National Association of Schools of Theatre 2007 review and follow up
69. National Survey of Student Engagement 2011 Snapshot
70. National Survey of Student Engagement 2011 Mean and Frequency Report
71. NCATE review materials including syllabi and program reviews
72. Nursing Summer Session Schedule
73. Nursing Undergraduate Student Handbook
74. Outreach and CE Bi-annual Work Plan 2012-2013
75. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll
76. Program Review for the English Department
77. Security Overview and Crime Statistics web page
78. Self-Study Executive Summary (2001)
79. Sexual Violence Policy
80. Social Change Model of Leadership Development web page
81. Strategic Planning and Initiatives web page
82. Student Grievance Procedure
83. Student Life and Development web page
84. Student Handbook 2011 – 2012
85. Student Union/Activities web page
86. Study Abroad Student Handbook
87. Third Party Comments
88. Third Party Comments on HLC Visit Page
89. Technology Master Plan June 2010-July2013
90. Undergraduate Catalogs
91. University Strategic Plan
92. University Studies Program Writing Flag Report
93. University Studies 2009 Program Assessment Update
94. Warrior Hut web page
95. Welcome Center Usage Report
96. WSU budget toolkit, including the Budget Calculator
97. WSU Educational Lean
98. WSU Organization Charts
99. WSU Regulation 3-7, Policies and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research

100. WSU Regulation 3-16, Distribution of Professional Improvement Funds (Administrative Service Faculty - MSAUAASF)
101. WSU Regulation 3-25, Travel Support for Undergraduate Research and Creative Presentations
102. WSU Regulation 5-2, Procedures for Affirmative Action Recruiting and Hiring
103. WSU Rochester Campus Development Plan 2011-2012
104. WSU Rochester Values and Guiding Principles
105. WSU Student Handbook
106. School of Business Faculty Vitae
107. Miscellaneous faculty vitae and PDP/PDR reviews provided by the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

Representatives from the entire institution worked on the self-study for the last three to five years. It is important to note that this wide range of inclusion is guaranteed by collective bargaining and how committees are to be filled. In fact, representatives from all constituency groups (four collective bargaining units, non-union administrators, and the student association) were appointed to a Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee. The team observed what appeared to be genuine interest in participating in the functioning of the university and how it may function more effectively in the future.

Prior to the formation of the self-study organization, there was significant participation in addressing the concerns raised from the last HLC visit in 2001. In some sense, the self-study process began with a kick-off presentation in October 2007, informing the campus community about the upcoming self-study and accreditation. Subgroups were formed to address each criterion and some of the members attended the HLC annual meeting.

In fall 2010, a web-based Campus Self-Study Survey was developed and distributed to all employees to gather various data for the self-study process. By the end of 2011, the Self-Study Report was complete. It is worth noting that this report contains an additional chapter, called the Next Chapter, that sets into motion significant planning efforts to keep WSU moving forward after the HLC evaluation is complete.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The Self-Study Report demonstrates that the institution has a clear understanding of the accreditation process. The report outlines all necessary components of the self study and clearly articulates the institution's position with respect to each of the criteria. Additionally, the Self-Study includes a request for Substantive Change Application for addition of a Doctoral Degree in Nursing Practice Program. The report represents an honest and objective review of the institution's strengths and weaknesses.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

The team considers the response of the organization to previously identified challenges to be adequate.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Requirements were fulfilled.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information. See Appendix on Federal Compliance.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Component 1A: The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's mission.

WSU has clearly defined and well articulated mission documents that are published extensively in university documents, marketing tools and other public information sources.

The WSU mission documents were recently revised in response to recommendations by the HLC Steering Committee. The new mission documents are also aligned to the Minnesota System of Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) 2010-2012 Strategic Plan. The revised mission and vision statements were approved in early 2011.

There is ample evidence that shows that the representatives from across the university community participated in the revision process, including faculty, staff, students, and community members.

Component 1C: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

There is evidence to show that the university community understands and supports the revised mission, as illustrated by a campus survey, open forums, and feedback from alumni and community members. Further, the team's inspection of documents, interviews with employees and students, and conversations with community members revealed that there was broad-based involvement in the process and clear understanding of the new mission statement.

The statement, “Winona State University is a community of learners improving our world,” is part of the former mission statement that has carried forward into the new mission statement, and acts as an easily remembered summary of the mission of the institution. This motto can be seen on campus in some buildings and has been integrated into printed materials and on the web site. The phrase also appears on purple banners on light poles across campus and on Huff Street and Main Street, the major arteries to Winona’s downtown that pass by the main campus.

Component 1D: The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

Through several collective bargaining contracts the MnSCU provides an administrative structure and policies that guarantee campus involvement in decision making processes.

Although the administrative structure is lean, especially in academic administration, communication structures have been put into place to assure that the decision making process is collaborative. For example, “Meet and Confer” mandates give various campus constituents the ability to make recommendations to the administration for their consideration.

A 2010 campus survey on campus governance indicated that approximately 70% of the employees are generally satisfied with the current governance structure.

Component 1E: The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

MnSCU has in place policies and procedures that uphold and protect WSU’s integrity. For example, team members observed that MnCSU has approximately 19 policies and procedures that range from Affirmative Action in Employment to policies on Student Compliants and Grievances. In addition, WSU also has regulations that include Policies and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research, Policies and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct, Conflicts of Significant Financial Interests Policy as Related to Grants and Sponsored Research Projects, Student Academic Appeals, Assurance of Compliance, Student Grievance Procedures, Procedures for Affirmative Action Recruiting and Hiring, and Policy Statement On and Plan to Prevent Workplace Violence.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Component 1B: In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

The organization has recognized that it needs to achieve greater diversity on campus, especially with regard to increasing diversity in faculty and students. The team observed that the institution has recently become more proactive, as evidenced by the affirmative

action goals for faculty and staff that are being set for each unit. There is also evidence that departments are achieving the diversity goals set for each department. The team, however, observed that these goals are often achieved through non-permanent hires. Five years ago, the total number of minority faculty was 27. Although this total is now at 36, there is concern that the strides made in this area will be lost due to attrition.

Efforts are underway to increase diversity in the student population. Since the last HLC visit, for example, the number of African American students has increased from under 0.5% of the total student population to nearly 2%. This is an increase, but the total increase is not noticeable on campus.

The institution has several initiatives that it has developed and implemented with the purpose of increasing diversity in the student body. However, these initiatives have not significantly impacted the overall campus diversity.

With the exception of hiring goals set by the Office of Affirmative Action, the team could find no planning documents that describe consistent systematic efforts, with measurable outcomes, to address this issue. To live up to the mission, "Winona State University is a community of learners improving our world," the institution must focus continued attention, and truly commit to diversifying the campus.

The team observed that the campus community was aware of the lack of diversity but was not engaged in a formal way to develop innovative ways to attract more diverse employees and a more diverse student body.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

NA

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NA

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission follow-up recommended.

CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Component 2A: The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

The team observed that strategic planning at all levels of the organization is used to move the institution forward and to make informed financial decisions. In fact, planning is a major strength of this campus. As part of the MnSCU system, WSU is required to connect its goals to MnSCU strategic plan. The campus strategic plan, the campus facilities master plan and the institution's financial planning all tie together in a way that strongly supports the campus' academic mission. The team also observed consistent planning at all levels that tie back to institutional "Work Plans."

The campus facilities master plan was completed in a very inclusive manner gathering input from across the campus, from the community and through consultation with the MnSCU Central Office. The plan is advertised as a 50-year plan that considers the needs of students, staff, instructional and operational space as well as development of a sustainable theme throughout the campus.

Component 2B: The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future

Winona State University has experienced a number of consecutive years of reductions in State funding and appears to have weathered the storm. Therefore, it is well positioned to invest in its strategic initiatives. Indications are that the State of Minnesota's revenues are on the uptrend thereby lessening the threat of further base or one-time reductions.

Fiscal year 2009-2010 was the last year that an "unallocation" (mid-year lapse) occurred, and the campus was able to deal with this one-time cut of nearly \$1.0 million from central resources. The campus has a centralized model for capturing savings when faculty and staff leave positions, therefore, there was no need to make further cuts from the colleges and divisions.

To manage changes in revenue, WSU developed a budget scenario calculator to examine various alternatives. This spreadsheet-based tool permits the institution to examine budgetary impact of changing economic factors. Eight categories cover the operational costs of the institutions: faculty salaries; administrative salaries; service employee salaries; clerical salaries; fringe benefits; utilities; supplies and materials; and miscellaneous services.

The campus has a number of entrepreneurial approaches to alternative revenue streams, therefore not putting as much reliance on State and Tuition sources. Examples of these new revenue streams are the restructuring of Summer Session which has seen growth of more than 50% due to on-line courses, use of a \$460,000 Innovation Fund as start-up funds for new programs and ideas, and an exclusive "pouring rights" contract with PepsiCo, to name a few.

Component 2C: The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence on institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for

continuous improvement.

The team observed that the assessment processes with regard to non-academic units are well planned and quite robust. Feedback loops are part of each plan with decisions made, based on results of assessment. For example, the campus technology plan includes a data collection plan, sets measureable goals, and defines metrics for goal achievement. The team viewed this plan as quite impressive and a model for other units within the institution and elsewhere.

The team observed that the entire campus speaks the language of assessment. For example, each year, WSU conducts an institution-wide Assessment Day to create opportunities for gathering feedback from the students, faculty, and staff about the functioning of the University. This activity is used to collect information about assessment of student learning and it also includes activities that are designed to assess the quality of services provided to students.

The Self-Study Report includes a chapter called, "The Next Chapter," that provides a strategic way of continuing to advance the mission of the institution. The goal of the Next Chapter is to "...explore promising and innovative ideas that build on the findings and work of the self-study report and advance the ability of Winona State University to achieve its mission and to enhance the quality and distinctiveness of our university as well as our ability to assess our progress toward our shared goals." This activity is inclusive, and provides another example of how WSU continues to use planning to advance its mission.

Component 2D: All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

WSU has successfully implemented Lean Principles to make non-academic units more efficient. Perhaps more impressive, is the fact that the institution has developed recognized expertise on the use of these principles in making academic processes more effective, thereby allowing the colleges to make better use of faculty and staff time. The campus has used this approach to adjust resources as base funds have been "unallocated" from the institution.

Thirty-two Educational Lean projects have been completed to date, including projects in Information Technology, scholarship system redesign, and advising undergraduate students. WSU estimates that it saved \$200,000 over five years by using Lean Projects to develop a more efficient means deploying its ITS workforce. This amounts to a reduction of 2.5 FTE. It is important to note that satisfaction numbers for the services provided by this unit have never been higher.

Sustainability is an integral part of the planning and thinking at Winona State University. Not only has Winona State University signed on to the American Council on University President's Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) contract, but it has also made good strides toward the goals of that contract, which include setting timelines for going carbon neutral, etc. The campus has also commissioned a LEED Silver building, established green technology program and a sustainability house as a theme house for a cohort of students.

The “e-Warrior: Digital Life and Learning Program,” aka student laptop program, has been an outstanding recruitment tool for Winona State University. The total program investment is approximately \$7.0 million annually from student fees which has allowed the campus to serve its students’ needs in a superior fashion, and as a side benefit has allowed the campus to reduce infrastructure and operating costs through the elimination of all computer labs. The student satisfaction level for this digital life and learning program has risen from 61% in the late 1990’s to a current level of 91%.

WSU recently used one-time Stimulus Funds to provide the means to pay for an early retirement buyout. The team viewed this as another example of how the institution has innovatively found ways to reduce future financial responsibilities and reduce costs.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

NA

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

NA

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NA

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission followup recommended.

CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Component 3A. The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

There is an ongoing transition from the SharePoint data base in which program mission statements, program-level learning outcomes, curriculum maps, means of measuring the goals, and those data collected to effect these measurements to the TaskStream database system. This system, once complete, will provide a comprehensive database

for all degree programs. Moreover, the multi-year commitment to build and populate this database has fostered a broad-based conversation about program-level assessment wherein faculty generally use and are comfortable with the language and purpose of assessment. This was evidenced not only in the Self-Study Report and the existence of the TaskStream data base, but also in numerous conversations with the various faculty committees charged with working on assessment and more generally the curriculum.

The HLC team members were able to verify in conversations with faculty and chairs that with input from specialized accreditation agencies and MnSCU, WSU faculty define expected student learning outcomes, create the strategies to determine whether those outcomes are achieved, and routinely review the effectiveness of their departments' student learning outcome assessment plan. Examples of these actions include the following:

- Communication faculty (IFO Faculty) video speeches and analyze them to determine the extent to which course and program objectives are met.
- The Music Department uses NASM guidelines for the ETS assessment tests and at the end of the year, faculty meet to discuss the results and look for trends; they use rubrics to score basic skills in Music; and they record all performances and review them.
- Programs accredited by ABET assess what graduates will be expected to do three to five years after graduation. These expectations are set by the faculty and their community partners.
- English faculty members do portfolio assessment. A brochure describing the process is distributed to majors. Majors have to collect their own materials. Students are reminded at advising sessions. There is a course to assist students in compiling their portfolio. Faculty members use a rubric to evaluate the portfolios. They also conduct exit interviews with graduates and write up a report.

Component 3B. The organization values and supports effective teaching.

Winona State demonstrates support for improved pedagogies, openness to innovative practices that enhance learning, keeping faculty abreast of the research on teaching and learning and technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction. Some examples of this support include:

- Faculty members are each allotted \$1300 per year for professional development, as stipulated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- The NewU/Learning in the 21st Century Initiative, which was a planning process to create a "new university," resulted in numerous examples that illustrate the institution's commitment to teaching and learning.
- The Faculty Development Committee's initiative helps faculty members learn how to conduct effective peer midterm course and instructor evaluations.
- The "Next Chapter" provides the platform from which great ideas can be implemented to assure continuing improvements in teaching and learning.

The team observed that faculty members across campus are highly educated, engaged in the scholarship of teaching, and active in research and scholarship. This is especially true for faculty members who teach in programs with associated accreditation. Numerous faculty vita from various WSU colleges and accreditation reports, reviewed by team members, support these observations.

Component 3C. The organization creates effective learning environments.

Perhaps the most visible of the physical learning spaces on the WSU campus is the Integrated Wellness Complex. Assessment data indicates that this center is well-used by students seeking fitness, recreation and health education services. In addition and perhaps more importantly, it provides learning opportunities to students in health-related disciplines.

Not only in the Self-Study Report but also in conversations with faculty and with community leaders, the extent of involvement of students within the wider community was clearly evident. Internships are frequent for students at both the Winona and Rochester campuses. Because of the pre-eminent business and health care presence in Rochester, the opportunities with IBM and the Mayo Clinic among others are particularly rich. Another variation on such enriched learning environments are service learning opportunities such as the Reading in the Mall program and hosting the Winona Farmer's Market.

Component 3D. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

Access to resources necessary to support learning and teaching include the Krueger Library which serves as a U.S. Government Depository, possesses an appropriate collection of print and electronic resources, and offers public terminals for internet access and free printing. The Information Gallery has multimedia computers, scanners, and high speed printers; supports both Mac and PC platforms, and circulates such technology as laptops, web cams and media carts to students. The Goddard Library at Rochester provides students access to online journals, dedicated research work stations and an extensive array of periodicals. It also offers "smart study" rooms, the Library Technology Center, and a fully equipped assistive technology room. The Writing Center, Math Achievement Center, ESL Services, Inclusion and Diversity Services, and Disability Services further demonstrate support of student learning.

In addition to the information and technology resources available in the Kreuger Library, WSU has been a leader in the state in providing its students with computer technology through its longstanding laptop initiative. Through this program, students are assured a current laptop computer and appropriate software to meet their needs in their degree program. Administrators, faculty and students all spoke highly of this program in the various face-to-face meetings with visiting team members. There were occasional comments by students that not all faculty utilized this resource in their courses as they might imagine, but such comments did not appear to diminish the perceived value of this learning resource.

Through such learning resources as the Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT)

group, WSU supports faculty in keeping current with research on teaching and learning, as well as technological advances that can positively affect student learning and the delivery of instruction. In the past year, TLT staff have worked with faculty in such areas as redesigning curriculum, learning to use the D2L course management program and the Tegrity course capture system, using social media such as Twitter to foster interactions between students and faculty and among students, and learning to use such tools as SoftChalk.

The newly created Professional Development Resource Center brings together a number of services to support faculty including the Teaching and Learning with Technology staff, Grants and Special Projects, IPAR, a statistics consulting office, and a faculty development office named Engaged Teaching, Research, and Scholarship. The TLT offers workshops as well as drop-in support. The Center includes a 30-person conference room and another room, both set up for ITV connections. They can also deploy mobile ITV equipment. In its third year of operation, the Center is used by an increasing number of faculty members. Its philosophy is to create a flexible, open, inviting space close to staff support.

Technology infrastructure and TLT support permit faculty members to develop creative and innovative ways to provide online courses and evaluation of those courses. For example, a music professor, with assistance from TLT, uses the open source software, Moodle, to allow interactive critiquing of musical scores through online presentation. Other institutions have adopted this faculty member's innovation.

Well resourced nursing laboratories support hands-on learning for students at both the Winona and Rochester campuses. Students reported that flexible hours and supportive staff provide much appreciated and needed help. The team also notes that WSU collaborates with the Mayo Clinic in the use of the simulation laboratory for DNP students.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

Although progress has been made in the area of diversifying student enrollment (and faculty/staff), attention needs to be paid to understanding the different, and at times unpleasant, experiences of students from different backgrounds. It is clear that the Winona campus generally appreciates having students from different backgrounds, however, the degree to which the challenges that they face is not always understood or appreciated by most on campus. While underrepresented students spoke warmly of the work and support provided by staff in the Office of Inclusion and Diversity, they shared a common perception that this is too often the only office that truly empathizes and cares for them. To be truly welcoming to all "takes a village" or in this case an entire campus. The university needs to focus student, faculty, and staff attention on making the campus community a more inclusive, supportive environment for all students – to achieve this end requires commitment and involvement by all faculty and staff. Additionally, enhancing the campus environment for all community members will support student and faculty/staff recruitment efforts to expand diversity at the university.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

The migration of program-level assessment information into TaskStream is, as yet, uneven across the various departments. Where the data have been fully transferred, some analysis and reflection has begun leading to some program modifications. Because these steps have not been completed fully across all academic units, the level of work remaining is substantial. Significant attention needs to be paid to completing these steps and realizing the full benefit of achieving program-level assessment across the entire institution.

In many important ways, WSU has developed a meaningful “culture of assessment” during the years since the last accreditation visit. The language of assessment is used broadly and accurately amongst faculty members, an infrastructure to collect data has been put in place, learning objectives for degree programs have been promulgated, and some curricular changes have resulted from consideration of the information collected. For the non-academic, operational units, assessment has advanced to a very mature level; hence, what follows pertains only to academic assessment.

Development of assessment infrastructure has not, however, been without its hesitations and interruptions. For example, development of data systems to house and report on those data which are collected has only recently come together with the appointment of a Director of Institutional Planning, Assessment and Research. This appointment has provided enormous assistance in the collection, access and management of these data. Previously, however, the underlying data system was changed which resulted in a significant pause in the progress on assessment which has only recently been restarted.

There also is not a point person when it comes to the overall leadership of assessment initiatives. This absence has been most evident in the assessment of the General Education program where only course-level assessment has occurred. General Education is a “program” embedded within all undergraduate degree programs. Examining the effectiveness of this program as opposed to the individual courses therein has not occurred.

Assessment has gained real traction at the department level, but it needs to be examined from a broader university level as well. There needs, in effect, to be an assessment of all assessment efforts, and this has not yet occurred. For example, the team could find no evidence that a committee or official group within the institution regularly reviews the results of program assessment. Further, this gap in the assessment process appears to be preventing information gained at the department level from coming together to inform the institution as to the institution’s overall effectiveness.

Given that no “Assessment Council” is in place, assessment results do not formally move to higher levels of the institution, which leads to questions about how strategic decisions are made (with respect to academics) and questions about how the rationale for decisions complete the feedback process.

- 4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; Commission followup recommended.

CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Component 4A: The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

The materials provided and discussions with department heads, students, faculty and staff, illustrate that WSU provides various opportunities for faculty, staff, and student development through financial incentives, including stipends and funding opportunities for various levels of research, travel, etc. During a time of severe budget issues, the amount of money allocated for faculty and staff, and student development was decreased minimally compared to the general budget reductions with which the institution had to cope. The team observed WSU's commitment to maintain funding for development and scholarly activities during budget exigencies. For example, the amount of money set aside to support graduate students remained constant through this period.

Component 4C: The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

The identified general education goals, although changing due to mandates by the MnSCU system, are a tangible effort on behalf of the institution to assure that the curricula provide the appropriate foundation for work in a global, diverse, and technological society. Additionally, the MnTC (Minnesota Transfer Curriculum) has 10 core goal areas of which diversity, global perspective and people and the environment are a part. The confluence of the general education goals adopted by the university with those imposed by the MnSCU system indicate a desire to assure that students are prepared to work in a global, diverse and technological society.

The institution has a strong service learning component, a rapidly growing travel study program and an international study program. Likewise, the creation and implementation

of the “laptop initiative”, helps to assure that students are technologically competent in the use of current technology. Each of these initiatives illustrate that the institution is considering the usefulness of its curricula in preparing students for the world in which they will be working.

Component 4D: The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

WSU provides support to assure responsible knowledge acquisition through the Grants & Sponsored Research Office and specific review bodies such as the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and the Institutional Research Board (IRB). The institution adheres to all MnSCU and federal policies regarding ethics and conduct. In addition, many specialty programs within the institution have their own codes of conduct that are espoused by faculty and taught to students involved in the discovery and application of knowledge.

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention

NA

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.

Component 4B: The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.

The institution has been continuously involved in general education initiatives over the past several years. Due to changes imposed by MnSCU, the process required significant adjustments resulting in three major approaches to general education assessment. The institution has used creative ideas such as “flag courses” identifying upper level courses that continue to contribute to the acquisition of general education skills, to demonstrate the commitment to a broad base of education that persists throughout the undergraduate curriculum, not just during the first two years when general education is usually assumed to be completed at most institutions.

After reading the materials presented in the self-study and supporting documents, and having a lengthy discussion with several faculty, staff, and students involved in the general education development process, it is clear that the institution has developed a detailed and coordinated plan related to identification and approval of general education courses. To qualify as general education, the curricular proposals submitted by the department must identify the general education goals it will meet and contain measures that will be used to provide evidence that the goals are being met.

Because of the last adjustment required by changes from MnSCU, Winona has not yet

had sufficient time to develop an effective general education assessment program that goes beyond the course level. Although earlier efforts by Winona provide a good indication that they possess the will and the expertise to make meaningful use of the new process, the institution has not developed a system to determine if the goals of general education are being satisfied. Further, even if such a system was in place, the program is new and no comprehensive data collection or analyses could have occurred at this point in time.

The Director of General Education position is currently open and has been open for an extended period of time. A position description exists and there is all indication that a person, hired from within, will soon be in place. With this paucity of leadership, programmatic general education assessment has not moved forward.

In short, the assessment of the new general education does not currently have leadership, a general plan of assessment, and no analyses that illustrate student achievement with regard to the goals of general education. Given that this issue was identified in the last comprehensive visit, there is ample evidence to suggest that WSU must address this issue prior to the next comprehensive visit.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)

NA

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; Commission followup recommended.

CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met

Component 5A: The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

The Self-study reported that faculty and students are extensively engaged in the local community through service learning and internship connections. The team was extremely impressed with the breadth and depth of the university's community engagement – clearly, this is a real strength for the institution. Through these outreach activities, the university engages a wide array of community partners ranging from small organizations like Kids First to large organizations like the American Red Cross, United Way, and Winona Health. Conversations with faculty and students consistently verified this impressive level of engagement. Additionally, Winona State was selected as a President's Honor Roll institution with distinction for 2012, which further supports the university's strong engagement in the local community.

Component 5B: The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

A Community Engagement Liaison position was established to identify needs in the local community and to connect faculty and students with project opportunities to address identified needs. In 2010-2011 over 5,900 students (70%) were involved in community service projects, 65 courses had a community service learning component, and 80% of the faculty reported volunteering at a community organization in the past five years. Conversations with this new staff member and faculty associated with the Center for Engaged Teaching and Scholarship revealed numerous ways that the university has impacted the local community. For example, students in a Management Information Systems class provided a technology orientation (i.e. how to use cell phones, laptops, MP3s, etc.) for community members.

Faculty and staff have established a university “theme” program (e.g. water, sustainable foods, home and place, wellness, etc.) to encourage service learning projects and other programming (i.e. speakers) to address aspects of the selected theme. Conversations with faculty, staff, and students revealed that the theme program has facilitated many new projects and speaker visits that engage students and members of the local community in effective ways. A number of theme partners were identified including the Lyceum Series, the Common Book, and the Consortium for Liberal Arts and Sciences Promotion Lecture Series.

Students, faculty, and staff reported to the team that the university has developed numerous ongoing community partnerships. Some examples mentioned included: Winona Parks and Recreation, Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center, the Mayo Health System, the Navajo Oral History project, Great River Shakespeare Festival, and Frozen River Film Festival to name a few. These endeavors provide a myriad of opportunities for student interns, faculty teaching, and media collaboration.

On the Rochester campus, a partnership with the Rochester Civic Theatre (RCT) allows use of WSU-R student activity funds to purchase blocks of prepaid tickets for RCT productions. This effort provides more student activities in Rochester by utilizing an existing community resource to connect the campus and students to the community. This is yet another example of the ways in which WSU and the communities it serves collaborate.

Component 5C: The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Conversations with numerous local community partners in Winona (e.g. Hiawatha Mental Health, Women’s Resource Center, Project Fine, etc.) revealed that faculty and student involvement in community service learning projects and internships is vital to area schools, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and businesses. These partners expressed deep gratitude and appreciation for their many beneficial connections with faculty and students at the university.

Meetings with the WSU-Rochester community partners, including representatives from Mayo Clinic, Boys and Girls Club, Family Services, Chamber of Commerce, Hawthorne Education Center, Rochester Public Schools, etc. demonstrated responsiveness to the needs of those organizations and the value of the services provided.

The proposed Doctorate in Nursing Practice is a major example of how the institution responds to the needs of the communities that WSU serves. The excellent program design involving both academic and experiential learning, excellent faculty, outstanding program laboratories, and community involvement in the program illustrate how mutually beneficial endeavors result when an institution extends its programming to meet the needs of a community.

WSU was a major player in responding to the needs of the health care community by developing and offering the DNP through a consortium of 4 universities. Over 50% of the DNP students were from WSU. Upon dissolution of the consortium, WSU has further developed the DNP program and will be offering it with continued support of the Mayo Clinic and the health care community.

Winona State identifies student needs and makes administrative changes to respond to those needs. Discussions with staff in the Integrated Wellness Complex and in the Warrior Hub provided team members with the opportunity to tour new and renovated facilities that demonstrated efforts to serve students better. New staff alignments also revealed ways that the university is striving to collaborate and to provide administrative support for students. Also, students reported that they appreciate and use the Warrior Hub and the Integrated Wellness Complex.

Student government appeared to be active, well respected, and effective in representing students' views to the institution's leadership. Discussions with faculty, staff, and students revealed this to be an accurate depiction of their effectiveness.

Component 5D: Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.

Members of the local community have access to the Winona State library. Several members of the community reported that community members appreciate and use this opportunity to access resources.

Winona State sponsors a wide array of athletic competitions, performing arts events, theater productions, and lecture/speakers series. All of these events and activities are available to students, faculty, staff, and members of the local community. All of these constituencies reported to the team that they appreciate and attend programs at the university.

2. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention**
NA
3. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require Commission follow-up.**

NA

4. **Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and require Commission follow-up. (Sanction or adverse action may be warranted.)**

NA

Recommendation of the Team

Criterion is met; no Commission followup recommended.

V. STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

No Change

A. Affiliation Status

Rationale for recommendation:

B. Nature of Organization

1. **Legal status** – No Change
2. **Degrees awarded** – No Change

C. Conditions of Affiliation

No Change

1. **Stipulation on affiliation status**

No Change

2. **Approval of degree sites**

No Change

3. **Approval of distance education degree**

No Change

4. **Reports required**

Progress Report**Topic(s) and Due Date (month-date-year)**

Student Outcomes Assessment and Assessment of General Education (University Studies) Program (March-15-2015)

Rationale and Expectations

The team could not find evidence to indicate that the results of departmental assessment come together to provide measures of institutional effectiveness. Further, results of assessment do not appear to be systematically reported throughout the institution. The lack of a formal system for evaluation and communication of assessment activities results in an institution that is forced to make decisions that may be without the advantage of the fuller vision afforded by assessment and the entailing feedback loops.

This absence has been most evident in the assessment of the General Education program where only course-level assessment has occurred. General Education is a “program” embedded within all undergraduate degree programs. Examining the effectiveness of this program as opposed to the individual courses therein has not occurred.

The report on assessment should have two parts, one on overall assessment and one on the assessment of general education. Using program reviews, assessment reports, etc., there should be a systematic way of organizing and then analyzing these reports so that WSU can get a continuing snapshot of institutional effectiveness. The plan should have a means of communicating assessment results horizontally and vertically throughout the institution, with feedback loops created to form a better alignment between the units and the whole.

The general education portion of the report needs to address the lack of a comprehensive plan to assess the learning outcomes identified in the program itself. The plan needs to view general education as a program that needs the same type of assessment activities that appear in other academic programs. Of course, this assessment plan must then dovetail into the overall assessment plan, providing meaningful data and multiple measures of how the insitutional is meeting its educational goals.

Monitoring Report - None**Contingency Report - None**

5. Other visits scheduled - None**6. Organization change request**

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) with five specialty programs: Family Nurse Practitioner; Adult/Gerontology Nurse Practitioner; Acute Care Nurse Practitioner; Adult/Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist; Nursing Organizational Leader. See separate report.

D. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

None

E. Summary of Commission Review

Timing for next comprehensive visit (academic year – 2021-2022)

Rationale for recommendation: Winona State University has made tremendous improvements since the last Comprehensive Visit, especially in the areas of strategic planning, non-academic assessment, updating facilities, and community engagement. WSU has strong leadership that strives for transparency and inclusiveness. The institution's clear sense of mission is quite apparent across campus and unique to the institution. The notion that WSU is a "community of learners, changing the world" is evident, needed, and appreciated by the community. The Rochester campus is viewed as of great benefit to the institution and to the Rochester community. The new Doctor of Nursing Practice program is an outstanding example of how the institution responds to the needs of the community. While finances will continue to remain tight, the institution, through its use of Lean practices and innovative financing, is poised for growth and promise in the future. The team, however, also believes that some of the items mentioned in this report will hamper the potential for success in the future. The team has experienced a wonderfully unique institution, with a clearly defined mission, and an outstanding collection of individuals. After reflecting on the evidence, the team feels comfortable recommending continued accreditation with a ten-year period before the next Comprehensive Visit.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

VII. APPENDIX: FEDERAL COMPLIANCE WORKSHEET**WORKSHEET FOR THE EVALUATION TEAM
ON FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS****INSTITUTIONAL MATERIALS RELATED TO FEDERAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWED
BY THE TEAM:**

1. Academic Integrity Policy
2. Academic Standing Policy (Revised 2012)
3. Alcohol and other Drug Policies
4. Annual Financial Report 2009 and 2010
5. Campus Crime Act web page
6. Cohort Default Rate for FY 2008, 2007, and 2006
7. Collective Bargaining Agreements
8. Disability Services Student Guides
9. Disability Services Faculty Handbook
10. Financial Aid web page
11. Graduate Catalog 2010-2012
12. Hazing Policy
13. HLC Credits and Program Length for Institutions Worksheet
14. Inclusion and Diversity web page
15. Minimum Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid Recipients
16. MnSCU Board Policies and Procedures
17. Security Overview and Crime Statistics web page
18. Sexual Violence Policy
19. Student Handbook 2011 – 2012
20. Student Grievance Procedure
21. Third Party Comments for Winona State University
22. Undergraduate Catalog 2010-2012
23. Winona State University Financial Audit, 2010
24. Winona State University Financial Audit, 2011
25. WSU Regulation 3-7, Policies and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
26. WSU Regulation 3-16, Distribution of Professional Improvement Funds (Administrative Service Faculty - MSAUAASF)
27. WSU Regulation 3-25, Travel Support for Undergraduate Research and Creative Presentations
28. WSU Regulation 5-2, Procedures for Affirmative Action Recruiting and Hiring
29. WSU Self Study Report
30. WSU Student Conduct Code

EVALUATION OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The team reviews each item identified in the Federal Compliance Guide and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution's ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in appropriate sections of the Assurance Section of the Team Report or highlighted as such in the appropriate AQIP Quality Checkup Report.

1. Credits, Program Length, and Tuition: *The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition). New for 2012: The Commission has a new policy on the Credit Hour. Complete the Worksheet in Appendix A and then complete the following responses. Attach the Worksheet to this form.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

 X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

 The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

2. Student Complaints: *The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints for the three years prior to the visit.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

 X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

_____ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

_____ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

_____ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

3. Transfer Policies: *The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

X_____ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

_____ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

_____ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

_____ The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

4. Verification of Student Identity: *The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education and has appropriate protocols to disclose additional fees related to verification to students and to protect their privacy.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

 The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

5. Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities: *The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.*

- **General Program Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Financial Responsibility Requirements:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department's review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion Two if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)*
- **Default Rates.** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about three years of default rates. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution's fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.*
- **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures:** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.*

- ***Student Right to Know.*** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution's policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion One if the team determines that disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)*
- ***Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance.*** *The institution has provided the Commission with information about policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students.*
- ***Contractual Relationships:*** *The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships (The institution should review the Contractual Change Application on the Commission's Web site for more information. If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require Commission approval and has not completed the appropriate Commission Contractual Change Application the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible.)*
- ***Consortial Relationships:*** *The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships (The institution should review the Consortial Change Application on the Commission's Web site for more information. If the team learns that the institution has such a consortial relationship that may require Commission approval and has not completed the appropriate Commission Consortial Change Application the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible.)*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

 X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

 The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

6. Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials: *The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

 X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

 The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

7. Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Boards: *The institution has documented that it discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence. Note that if the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is currently under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action from, any other federally recognized specialized or institutional accreditor in the past five years, the team must explain the action in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for recommending Commission status in light of this action. In addition, the team must contact the staff liaison immediately if it learns that the institution is at risk of losing its degree authorization or lacks such authorization in any state in which the institution meets state presence requirements.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

 The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

8. Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment: *The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these comments. Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to the team's review of the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.*

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE THAT REFLECTS THE TEAM'S CONCLUSIONS:

 X The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission's requirements but recommends follow-up.

 The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission's requirements and recommends follow-up.

 The team also has comments that relate to the institution's compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional Monitoring, if any: NA

ADVANCEMENT SECTION

REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY
Winona, MN

March 19, 2012 – March 21, 2012

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission

A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

EVALUATION TEAM

Dr. Nathan P. Ritchey, Professor and Chair, Department of Mathematics and Statistics,
Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH 44555 (Team Chair)

Dr. Blair M. Lord, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Eastern Illinois University,
Charleston, IL 61920

Dr. Mary Sue Marz, Nursing Faculty and AQIP Coordinator, Eastern Michigan University,
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Dr. H. Bart Merkle, Vice Provost/Dean of Students, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI
49401

Mr. Thomas G. Sonnleitner, Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, University of
Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Oshkosh, WI 54901

Dr. David Underwood, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Arkansas Tech
University, Russellville, AR 72801

Dr. Faye N. Vowell, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Western New Mexico University, Silver City, NM 88062

Contents

I. Overall Observations about the Organization

The Higher Learning Commission conducted a comprehensive evaluation of Winona State University from March 19, 2012 – March 21, 2012. In addition, the institution submitted a Substantive Change Application for addition of a Doctoral Degree in Nursing Practice Program.

Founded in 1858, Winona State University is the oldest higher education institution in Minnesota and the first state-supported normal school west of the Mississippi River. The institution enrolls nearly 8,900 students and offers coursework in more than 80 disciplines. Nearly 400 faculty members on two campuses, one in Winona and one in Rochester, are employed to deliver course instruction. The Rochester campus was established in 1917 and a permanent campus was created in 1979.

The HLC site visit team was quite impressed by the “Can Do” attitude that pervades every level of the entire institution. The administration was quite cooperative, visionary, and innovative. The institution’s faculty members are well educated, active in community and university service, and engaged in scholarship in ways that are in accordance with the mission of the institution. The staff members are also very well educated and play an active role in assessment and planning activities. In short, each constituency appeared to be responsive to each other’s needs, thus creating a family atmosphere.

The mission of WSU and the entities that make it unique are known and widely embraced throughout the institution and in the communities that surround both campuses. In fact, community engagement is quite noteworthy and is clearly a strength of WSU.

Although WSU has experienced significant cuts in state funding, it has developed a number of innovative ways to reduce costs and move forward strategically. In spite of the fact that WSU has less capital, it has, none-the-less, capitalized on innovative ideas such as the Professional Development Resource Center, Digital Life and Learning Program, Common Book and annual themes which distinguish WSU from other institutions.

The proposed doctoral program in Nursing is well planned and is ready to move forward, especially with the experience gained with the existing program. Team members observed that the program has a good mix of educational and experiential learning opportunities and it is well positioned with its location in Rochester. Overall, the team finds this initiative to be outstanding.

Although the language of assessment is spoken throughout the campus, assessment of student learning outcomes is occurring primarily at the departmental level. There is no system currently in place to systemically review assessment results and communicate those results throughout the institution. In Topic One, the team will provide some advice on this topic.

General Education, or University Studies, has seen significant changes in the past few years. Because of changes at the state level, WSU has been required to align its general education program with the state’s model for general education. As a result, assessment procedures have lagged behind and assessment of program goals is currently non-existent. In Topic Two, the team will provide some ideas on this topic.

WSU has recognized the need to increase diversity throughout campus and has taken several steps to achieve this goal. Unfortunately, these initiatives have not produced the hoped for results. In addition to increasing diversity the team believes that WSU must evaluate the climate that exists on campus to welcome an increasingly diverse community of learners. In Topic Three the team will provide some thoughts on diversity.

As part of the comprehensive evaluation, WSU has requested to add a Doctoral Program in Nursing Practice. In Topic Four, the team will provide some comments on this well-planned program.

II. Consultations of the Team

A. Topic One: Assessment or Student Learning

The TaskStream database, once complete, should provide a comprehensive assessment resource for all degree programs. The multi-year commitment to build and populate the new database has fostered a broad-based conversation about program-level assessment wherein faculty members generally use, and appear to be comfortable with, the language and purpose of assessment. This was evidenced not only in the Self-Study Report and the existence of the TaskStream database, but also in numerous conversations with the various faculty committees charged with working on assessment. Where the data have been fully migrated, some analysis and reflection has begun leading to a few specific program modifications. Because these steps have not been completed fully across all academic units, the level of work remaining is substantial.

It is important that the institution move forward with as much haste as possible to complete the migration of data into the new system. There are at least two reasons for the urgency. First, the institution has made an impressive push in the direction of meaningful assessment and it is imperative that the momentum not be lost awaiting a mechanism for archiving and analyzing the data. And second, since the purpose of assessment data is to drive positive changes in teaching and learning, it is important that the data are not significantly out-of-date before they can be analyzed and put to effective use.

Thanks to the recent self-study, the faculty, students, and administration have a better, more current understanding of the purpose and techniques of assessment than at any time during the last ten years. It is important that the institution makes the most of this fortuitous circumstance and seizes the opportunity to flesh out an exemplary assessment program. Data are necessary to successful assessment. However, it is equally important to have a faculty and administration that understand the purpose of assessment and who are committed to analyzing and using the data in creative ways that foster improvements in the teaching process and learning outcomes.

The absence of an assessment “coordinator” has significantly impeded assessment at the program level and distribution of results thereof. The development of a position description and the expectation of filling the position clearly will help in this regard. A person who is responsible for assessment needs to be an immediate priority for WSU.

Although assessment is taking place at the program level, the team had trouble finding evidence that the results of assessment are communicated to higher levels of the institution. Part of the reason for this is the lack of a person who is in charge of assessment. The team, however, also suggests that the results of

assessment be communicated by each program to an “Assessment Council,” comprised of various constituencies on campus. The responsibility of a council is generally to develop ways to assess the assessment process, analyze program reviews, make generalizations about student learning at WSU, and communicate these results throughout the institution, especially to the WSU administration.

Further, a process should be created in which the administration responds to the results provided by the Assessment Council and formally gives feedback on how it will address issues that require additional financial commitment.

In short, while assessment is occurring at the program level, this information is not being shared, amalgamated, or formally reported throughout the institution. As a result, the institution as a whole is not fully utilizing the information that it has paid so much to obtain.

B. Topic Two: General Education

It was noted in the Assurance Section of this report that assessment of General Education has been confined to course-level assessment. Specifically, courses are assessed on whether they align with and address the goals of General Education. Certainly, this is laudable, but it does not substitute for an assessment of the General Education Program.

Tackling the comprehensive assessment of a program, which spans many courses in many departments and colleges, can be an overwhelming prospect. There are, however, strategies that can make the task more manageable, and fall under the phrase “do not try to do everything all at once.” Deconstructing this into separable tasks and undertaking them over several years can be considered. The WSU General Education Program, as is true of all such programs, has several program goals. Assessing a single goal in a given year is one way to lessen the burden. It also is not necessary to assess every student in every course. The overarching objective is to develop meaningful information on which to base decisions and program adjustments. Careful sampling also can be used to obtain valid information without becoming buried in data. Not every student in every course across all program goals needs to be examined. Using such strategies will yield meaningful information in a matter of a few years.

None of the foregoing comments should be interpreted to mean that the current course-level evaluations should be eliminated. Rather taken together, the course-level and program level assessments along with appropriate means to reflect and make curricular adjustments could elevate WSU’s initiatives to a “best practice.”

C. Topic Three: Diversity

While the following are a few recommendations that may assist the university to address challenges regarding diversity, the team acknowledges that working toward a better, more inclusive campus community is a challenge for all institutions including our own. Each campus faces its own unique challenges

based upon its institutional history, culture, and geographic setting. Although the following notions have been helpful on other campuses, the WSU community must decide whether any of these notions can help the campus strive to be a more inclusive, supportive place for all students.

A climate study that provides safe opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to share their experiences at Winona State would enable the institution to learn about the experiences of all community members. While students reported concerns about the way some members of the community are treated, they also indicated a positive feeling for the university and a desire to help make it a better place for all. A well done climate study would enable the university community to learn about the way people are treated on campus and to take meaningful actions that will endorse courtesy, civility, and respect as institutional values. The university would benefit from campus-wide engagement on this issue.

Most institutions are challenged to educate members of a majority group about the actual experiences of minority group members on campus. Too often members of any majority are oblivious to insensitive, sometimes hateful behavior that is directed at some in the community. Whenever these behaviors occur, any lack of institutional acknowledgment and/or action may cause members of the community to perceive the institution as not caring or, worse, as trying to hide ugliness that could cause public embarrassment – neither of these perceptions contributes positively to a community that values diversity and inclusion.

One practical way to address uncivil, hateful behavior in a university community is to implement a “biased incident” reporting system. Biased incidents are behaviors directed at an individual to make him/her feel belittled, disrespected, threatened, or unsafe because of whom the individual is. Some of the most common ways biased behaviors may target individuals or groups include: race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, sex/gender, gender identity, gender expression, political affiliation, religion, familial status, marital status, disability, age, height, weight, or veterans status.

Encouraging members of the university community to report biased incidents when they occur provides four opportunities for an institution: first, a reporting system conveys a strong, public message that the institution cares about the way people are treated; second, the institution has an opportunity to engage in educational dialogue with individuals who exhibit biased behavior; third, the institution can provide appropriate support and assistance to the individual(s) negatively impacted by a biased incident; and fourth, the institution can provide members of the community with a summary of incidents that have been reported. All four of these opportunities for action enable an institution to demonstrate its commitment to a learning environment that is inclusive of everyone.

D. Topic Four: Doctoral Program in Nursing Practice

The program for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) fits well within the WSU mission and the AACN and other appropriate professional guidelines. Previous

experience through the consortium program for DNP and the needs analysis indicate a demand for this program in the community. Close monitoring of demand will assist in the decision of which current master's programs to phase out and which to retain as the profession moves toward the doctorate as the level of practice required for advanced practice in 2015. In order to remain budget neutral, close monitoring of enrollments will be essential.

Faculty members have been involved since the inception of the DNP via the consortium and bring experience in doctoral education to bear on the WSU DNP. Maintaining clinical competency for the faculty will be essential to the success of the program. Further investigation of Boyer's model for scholarly work may assist the faculty in meeting requirements for tenure and promotion. Resources to meet the needs as students progress through the orals and final Evidence Based Practice Project will need to be closely watched to avoid over burdening the current and future faculty and maintain the high quality of this DNP Program.

E. Topic Five: Miscellaneous

WSU is currently in the process of recruiting a new president. By most accounts the leadership provided by the last two presidents greatly contributed to the success that WSU enjoys today. There are also several other vacancies in key administrative offices. It will be essential for WSU to employ a new president and other key personnel who will move the institution forward in ways that continue to be innovative, creative, and inclusive.

The self-study and accompanying documents did not discuss the ways in which WSU recruits, retains, and provides additional opportunities for gifted and talented students. Many similar institutions have had great success in developing an honors program with the goal of attracting some of the region's best students. WSU should evaluate how it attracts high achieving students and the types of activities that are available to these high achieving students. The benefits of having a substantial cohort of high achieving students on campuses are well documented. The National Collegiate Honors Council can provide resources for developing honors programming.

The WSU deans currently appear to be doing the work of both department chairs and deans at most institutions. Because of system negotiated labor contracts, WSU department chairs have very little responsibility or ownership for their respective departments. This leaves the deans in the precarious position of doing both jobs. This is problematic as there is little time for the deans to advance their colleges in terms of increasing major grant projects, fund raising, and community partnerships. At the same time, the traditional role of a department chair includes faculty evaluation, faculty recruitment, and general handling of student issues. The lack of a person who feels responsibility for faculty recruitment and advancement at the department level can cause a void in recruiting an outstanding and diverse faculty. The institution will also have a void in terms of professional development for those individuals who may aspire to executive level positions. In light of the constraints inherent to the position of

Dean, the institution should find ways to address this problem by considering an expanded use of the position of Associate Dean, lobby for expanded role of department chairs, and/or other administrative assistance.

The Center for Mississippi River Studies is currently in a state of change and has not yet fully realized its potential. The team suggests that WSU continue to find ways to make full use of this unique enterprise. The potential benefits for both WSU and the surrounding region from additional academic programming, environmental studies, research and grant funding, and even travel and tourism should be evaluated on as part of ongoing planning activities.

III. Recognition of Significant Accomplishments, Progress, and/or Practices

- The Technology Infrastructure is impressive. The team observed multiple ways in which IT at WSU is more advanced than other similar institutions. The significant use of assessment to move forward strategically is noteworthy. In fact, assessment appears to inform all decisions. The use of Lean Principles to reduce costs, improve efficiency and increase efficacy is an example of the forward thinking that is routine in this unit.
- The Rochester campus, with its excellent facilities, creative programming, and community partnerships, is of great benefit to WSU. These activities help to define the unique mission of the institution. The cooperation between Rochester Community and Technical College serves as an outstanding example of how institutions of higher learning can partner to better the lives of the people they serve.
- The use of Educational Lean to evaluate and develop more efficient operations within WSU represents a milestone in higher education. The numerous examples of how various campus entities have been able to expand operations while reducing human and other resources is quite impressive and is worthy of emulation by other institutions.
- The Professional Development Resource Center provides faculty and staff both the facilities and the expertise to advance in their careers. The services provided by the Center, which include training in technology and consults in statistics are considered to be a best practice by the team. The well-equipped facility is also worth mentioning.
- The National Child Protection Training Center is quite important, impressive, and unique. This Center is recognized nationally for its expertise and contributions to end child abuse. The Center is also an example of the type of excellence that exists at WSU.
- Community service and the responsibilities that college educated citizens have are taught by example at WSU. The entire institution appears to be involved in some form of community service. In fact, Winona State was selected as a President's Honor Roll Institution with Distinction for 2012.
- The DNP Program is well planned and based on the experience gained through a similar program offered by a consortium. The community support for the program is a further example of the collaborative relationship that exists between WSU and the community. The DNP Program has the potential to serve as a model for other universities.

*Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS*

INSTITUTION and STATE: Winona State University, MN

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW (from ESS): Visit also includes a change request to offer the DNP program.;

DATES OF REVIEW: 3/19/12 - 3/21/12

Nature of Organization

LEGAL STATUS: Public

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

DEGREES AWARDED: A, B, M, S, D

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

Conditions of Affiliation

STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS: Accreditation at the doctoral level is limited to the Doctor of Nursing Practice offered through a consortium between Metropolitan State University; Minnesota State University, Mankato; Minnesota State University Moorhead; and Winona State University.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS: Prior Commission approval required.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES: The institution has been approved under Commission policy to offer up to 5% of its total degree programs through distance education. The processes for expanding distance education are defined in other Commission documents.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: no change

REPORTS REQUIRED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: Progress report due 3/15/15 on assessment generally and with regard to general education

OTHER VISITS SCHEDULED: None

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: none

Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2001 - 2002

YEAR FOR NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2011 - 2012

Team Recommendations for the
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2021 - 2022

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

INSTITUTION and STATE: Winona State University, MN

TYPE OF REVIEW (from ESS): Continued Accreditation _____ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs

		Program Distribution	Recommended Change (+ or -)
Programs leading to Undergraduate	Associate	1	
	Bachelors	65	
Programs leading to Graduate	Masters	13	
	Specialist	1	
	First Professional		
	Doctoral	1	

Off-Campus Activities

In-State: Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:	Present Activity: Rochester (Winona State University-Rochester) St. Paul (St. Paul College) None	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Out-of-State: Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:	Present Wording: None None None	Recommended Change: (+ or -)
Out-of-USA: Campuses: Additional Locations: Course Locations:	Present Wording: None None None	Recommended Change: (+ or -)

Distance Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

Certificate - 31.0504 Sport and Fitness Administration/Management (Certificate in Sports Management) offered

via Internet; Certificate - 51.1501 Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling (Addiction Counseling) offered via Internet; Doctor - 51.3808 Nursing Science (Doctor - 51.16 Nursing (Doctor of Nursing Practice degree)) offered via Closed circuit;Internet

Recommended Change:

(+ or -)

Correspondence Education Programs:

Present Offerings:

None