Higher Learning Commission
Program to Evaluate and
Advance Quality (PEAQ)

IWU Self-Study Steering Committee
October 2011

Five Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity

• IWU’s mission is clear and articulates commitments.

• IWU’s mission recognizes diversity.

• The University’s mission pervades the organization.

• IWU’s administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes.

• The University upholds & protects its integrity.
Criterion 1: Strengths

- Mission documents demonstrate congruence with one another.
- The commitment to enhance campus diversity is a core and essential component of the mission documents.
- There is a general understanding of the values expressed within mission documents by members of the University community.
- The University complies with federal and legal mandates and operates with a strong sense of integrity.

Criterion 1: Challenges

- University web pages and handbooks should make more explicit references to the language used in mission documents when situations merit that connection.
- A handbook for exempt staff, including mission document references, needs to be created.
- An electronic version of the handbook for non-exempt staff should be developed.
- Staff orientation programs should offer translation services to new employees who are non-native speakers.
Criterion 1: Challenges (cont.)

- The Strategic Plan language regarding diversity needs to be revised so as to reflect a more inclusive definition of the term.

- Relevant portions of handbooks and similar documents should be translated so as to accommodate the needs of University members who are non-native speakers.

- A University wide system for monitoring the authenticity of transcripts and credentials of new staff employees needs to be created.

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Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future

- The University prepares for societal and economic trends.

- IWU’s resource base supports educational programs and future plans for maintaining and strengthening quality.

- Ongoing assessment processes provide reliable evidence of effectiveness.

- All levels of planning align with IWU’s mission.
Criterion 2: Strengths

- IWU’s Mission Statement, Strategic Plan, and Master Plan have been effectively used to coordinate planning efforts.

- IWU has increased the inclusion of constituencies and transparency in the University’s planning processes.

- IWU employs a systematic use of data to inform planning, decision-making and assessment.

- IWU is in a stable financial situation. A successful capital campaign has been launched with nearly $94 million out of the $125 million dollar goal having been reached.

Criterion 2: Strengths (cont.)

- Construction of Minor Myers Jr. Welcome Center and beginning construction on new classroom building address institutional needs as outlined in the Master Plan. Other capital projects (e.g., Joslin Atrium, Ames School of Art entrance) have improved the quality of campus life and have contributed to the maintenance of a beautiful physical plant.

- Recent construction projects have only been started when funds to support buildings are in hand.

- IWU’s strong, talented student body that is academically capable and increasingly more diverse, is supported by a dedicated, talented, and effective faculty and staff.
Criterion 2: Strengths (cont.)

• IWU’s work force has remained stable in spite of the severe effects of the economic recession.

• Long-standing community concerns have been addressed:
  1) Tuition benefits program for staff dependents
  2) Child-care facility for children of faculty and staff

• Faculty diversity is representative of percentages within IWU’s Peer/Aspirant Group.

• IWU has an extensive faculty development program.

Criterion 2: Challenges

• Effective communication concerning planning and budgeting decisions should be continued.

• Planning and budgeting decisions should be executed with greater flexibility, allowing contingency planning to occur early on during crisis situations.

• A greater base of support for the annual fund and other flexible sources of revenue need to be created, in addition to current capital campaign efforts.

• IWU’s investment in technology should be greater, including the expansion of bandwidth capacity and improvements in infrastructure.
Criterion 2: Challenges (cont.)

- Increases in the student financial aid budget will be required to address changing family demographics with particular regard to affordability.

- IWU’s recruitment strategies should broaden to other geographical areas to account for increased competition for students from the Chicago area.

- The University should establish more consistency in enrollment patterns from year to year.

Criterion 2: Challenges (cont.)

- Staff compensation needs to be improved significantly to meet comparable compensation packages at Peer/Aspirant institutions.

- A work-load analysis of staff activity needs to be completed to determine how to more efficiently allocate staff work across the campus.

- The staff merit pay system (already prepared) needs to be implemented, and faculty compensation levels need to be raised to reach the AAUP 80th percentile benchmarks.
Criterion 2: Challenges (cont.)

- Phased and early retirement programs need to be enacted to create institutional flexibility, while allowing eligible and interested faculty and staff to prepare for their retirement.

- Faculty development funding needs to be stabilized to restore existing programs and opportunities at pre FY 2009 levels.

- Careful management of the University’s indebtedness ($81 million) needs to be maintained and reduction sought when possible.

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Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

- **Student learning outcomes** are clearly stated for each educational program, making effective assessment possible.

- The University values and supports **effective teaching**.

- The University creates effective **learning environments**.

- **Learning resources** support student learning and effective teaching.
Criterion 3: Strengths

- Student learning goals have been established in every academic department and school.
- Assessment occurs regularly throughout the University.
- Teaching effectiveness is systematically evaluated via hiring, tenure, and promotion policies, and in the nomination of endowed chairs and professorships.
- Teaching effectiveness is widely acknowledged on the part of students and alumni.
- Resources are regularly secured to insure that meaningful student learning occurs.

Criterion 3: Challenges

- Systematic sharing of assessment procedures and outcomes needs to be implemented (to include students).
- Evaluations and revisions of University-wide programs need to continue to be pursued (e.g., general education, the Writing Program, May Term, study abroad, co-curricular planning).
- Alternative strategies for determining work-load that extend beyond credit hour production should be evaluated.
- Support for both disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs needs to be strengthened.
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Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery & Application of Knowledge

• IWU demonstrates that it values life-long learning.
• Intellectual inquiry is an integral aspect of IWU’s educational programs.
• The University assesses the usefulness of its curricula for students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.
• Support is provided to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Criterion 4: Strengths

• Principles of life-long learning are clearly articulated.
• Student and faculty accomplishments are frequently recognized.
• The University has an extensive and strong general education program.
• IWU graduates are successful in career and future endeavors.
• The University has strong academic integrity policies.
Criterion 4: Challenges

- Greater support for undergraduate research will be required if more students are encouraged to pursue such opportunities.
- Time constraints have impeded faculty engagement in scholarly activity.
- Professional development opportunities for staff are lacking.
- Communication to students regarding the goals of the general education program should be enhanced.

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Criterion 5: Engagement & Service

- The University learns from its constituencies and analyzes its capacity to serve needs and expectations.
- IWU is committed to engaging with its constituencies and communities.
- The University demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.
- Constituencies value the services the IWU provides.
Criterion 5: Strengths

• IWU has demonstrated a strong recognition of the roles internal and external constituencies play in helping to implement the values embedded in the University mission documents.

• The University has a strong record of engagement with its constituencies.

• A strong degree of loyalty to the University is expressed by internal and external constituencies.

Criterion 5: Challenges

• Communication among the various internal and external constituencies should be improved.

• Assessment concerning the use of campus facilities by the surrounding community should be conducted.

• Assessment of the contributions IWU faculty, staff, students, and alumni make to the community should be enhanced.
IWU Self-Study Questions and Comments