Accreditation Review Report

Linfield College

Prepared for the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities

5th-Year Evaluation Visit, October 20 and 21, 2003

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PART A: ACTIONS TAKEN REGARDING RECOMMENDATION

Systematizing Assessment and Planning

The 1998 full-scale accreditation visit found the college using its self-study process to launch a major strategic planning initiative. Because the planning initiative lagged behind the self-study, the 1998 evaluation committee was non-committal about Linfield’s planning effort. The first of the committee’s two general recommendations (Evaluation Committee Report, September 23-25, 1988, p. 38) spoke to the issue of linking assessment and planning:

The Evaluation Committee commends Linfield College for the widespread participation and representation of all constituencies, including students, in the self-study and strategic planning processes. The Committee was impressed with the level of community involvement, the investment of time by faculty, administrators, staff and students, and the institutional commitment to assessment and self study. Linfield seems to be at that point in its strategic planning and assessment processes where much data have been generated. Some departments have initiated assessment measure to examine the effectiveness of the academic programs; others are farther behind. What is unclear to the present evaluators is how the assessment activities will influence academic planning, and how the self study and planning processes will form the basis for an ongoing and cyclical process linking planning and assessment—a concern raised during the regular, fifth year interim visit in 1993, and the last full scale evaluation in 1988. Consequently, the Committee recommends that Linfield act quickly to insure the development of satisfactory assessment measures in those units that do not presently have them, and that the College make explicit how it intends to utilize the results of its assessment activities to influence the planning process in a systematic way. (Standard IIB, Policy 2.2.)

During our October 25, 1999, focused interim visit, the college demonstrated its implementation of new or revised assessment measures for all academic units that had either lacked such measures or were rated “weak” according to the evaluation committee. The college also demonstrated that the strategic agenda was on schedule for adoption by the Board of Trustees on November 6, 1999. Subsequent to the focused interim evaluation visit, Planning for the Future: The Linfield College Strategic Agenda, 2000-2005, (see Exhibit 1A) was adopted by the trustees.

Strategy VII of the strategic agenda is entitled “Linking Assessment, Planning and Budgeting Within an Enhanced Governance Structure.” A key measure for effecting a proper linking of assessment to planning was creation of a Planning Council, charged with (see Exhibit 1A for full text):

• reviewing departmental plans as indicated under Goal 1, Recommendation 1 above.
• prioritizing the strategies, goals, and recommendations of this and subsequent strategic agendas and reporting these priorities to the Budget Advisory Council
• reviewing and proposing modifications to the strategies, goals, and recommendations of the strategic agenda over time.
• monitoring the college’s progress in reaching the goals of this and subsequent strategic agendas.
• consulting with the Office of Institutional Research, committees, departments, divisions, the President’s Advisory Council, and external consultants as needed in fulfilling the tasks identified in a-d above.

For reference, Goal 1 of the strategic agenda reads as follows:

Ensure that all college departments use assessment information to formulate plans that in turn inform annual budget requests.

Recommendation 1: All academic and administrative departments must prepare annual assessment reports and annual plans. The plans must articulate goals and their associated budget implications for the subsequent year and must be informed by assessment results summarized in the assessment reports. The plans will be reviewed for the consistency of support for the college’s mission statement and the strategies, goals and recommendations established in this and subsequent strategic agendas by the appropriate member of the President’s Advisory Council and subsequently by the Planning Council identified under Goal 3, Recommendation 1 below. The submission and review process will occur each spring beginning in spring 2000.

Recommendation 2: Departmental budget requests based on their plans and the annual budget instructions are to be forwarded to the appropriate member of the President’s Advisory Council and subsequently to the Budget Advisory Committee beginning with the 2001-02 budget cycle in fall 2000.

Though the timelines stipulated in the strategic agenda were more optimistic than could be realized, the preceding framework guided the college at every stage of the Planning Council’s creation. The council—chaired by the vice president for academic affairs and consisting additionally of four faculty members, three administrators, two LEA representatives, two students, and a trustee—began meeting in spring of 2000. The Planning Council’s first full review of departmental assessment plans and reports was conducted in the fall of 2002 (for the 2001-02 academic year) rather than in fall of 2001 (for the 2000-01 academic year). The delay was occasioned by the need first to develop a standardized format, including assessment data, for the annual reports from all administrative and academic units. (See Exhibit 1B for the college’s annual reports for the 2001-02 and 2002-03 academic years, respectively.)

A large portion of the Planning Council’s effort in 2001-02 was devoted to another item from the strategic agenda. Under Strategy VI—“Identifying Our Resource Base,” Goal 1 directed the council to “Identify the desired McMinnville campus enrollment and the resulting net tuition revenue.”
A bit of background is necessary to elucidate this charge to the Planning Council. With acquisition in 1998 from the Hewlett-Packard Corporation of an additional 115 contiguous acres (a tract later named the “Keck campus”), the college more than doubled in size. Along with the additional land came an associated 105,000 square feet of new buildings. To help assess its options, the college contracted with Paulien and Associates (Exhibit 1C) for a space utilization study. That study indicates that with all physical facilities acquired from Hewlett Packard and envisioned in our capital campaign, the college will have, save for two limiting factors, physical facilities sufficient to accommodate 1900 students. The limiting factors are, first, student housing and, second, laboratory facilities. Otherwise the college finds itself, relative to national norms for liberal arts colleges, with a surplus of classrooms, offices, and administrative space. (It should be noted that the Paulien report addresses net square footage and not the quality or condition of existing buildings.)

Simply growing to fill up underutilized space is, of course, insufficient for determining a college’s optimal level of enrollment. Taking advantage of economies of scale in physical plant space, equipment, and plant personnel needs to be weighed against other factors, especially those affecting academic quality. On March 22, 2001, following intensive dialogue with the Linfield community, the Planning Council adopted (see Exhibit 1D) the following motion, complemented by the ensuring rationale:

The Planning Council recommends that Linfield College adopt a 2009-10 student enrollment target of 1750 FTE for the McMinnville campus. To this end it considers three major initiatives essential to supporting the vision articulated above:

- To attract and retain the finest professors and other college staff members, we must achieve the trustee-adopted compensation goals for each category of Linfield employee.
- To foster continual improvement in our academic programs we must, even as we grow, lower to 14:1 the ratio of students to full-time faculty.
- To provide a learning and living environment worthy of Linfield’s most important resource, its people, we must complete the new Keck campus facilities and provide for other needed upgrades to classrooms and laboratories.

The 1750 FTE goal was formally endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Linfield Board of Trustees in September of 2001. That number remains the goal of the Planning Council’s long-range financial model, which projects revenues and expenditures in each year up to the 2008-09 academic year.

Just as annual review of departmental assessment plans and reports by the Planning Council has closed the loop between assessment and planning at Linfield College, the council has also taken steps to close the loop between planning and budgeting. The college now operates on a multi-year budget planning model (see Exhibit 1E) negotiated by the Planning Council and the 2001-03 chairperson of the Faculty Executive Council. Each year the Planning Council meets with the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) in the fall, then holds a public meeting on the budget priorities transmitted to the BAC.
During its deliberations on the annual budget, the BAC then generates a list of planning questions for the Planning Council (see Exhibit 1F). The Planning Council, in its turn, takes on such questions as are relevant to it and refers other questions to the appropriate faculty or college-wide committee. Though still under refinement, this process has generated a heightened level of community awareness about the manner in which strategic priorities inform the budget process.

An excellent example of the way strategic priorities now inform the budget process may be found in the most recent round of budget deliberations. At its meeting of October 16, 2002, the Planning Council adopted the following resolution (see Exhibit 1D):

For the five-year period beyond 2003-04, the Planning Council’s first priority is gradual movement toward all employees’ compensation goals. The Council’s second priority is movement toward the 14:1 full-time faculty to student ratio.

The Planning Council’s first priority for the 2003-04 budget year is to integrate the new library and theatre’s operating and human resource costs. The Council’s second priority is movement toward all employees’ compensation goals. The Council recommends that in 2003-04 the current student-faculty ratio be maintained.

This resolution deals, over time, with the college’s three major strategic priorities. The first item is the achievement of compensation goals for Linfield employees. The second is the achievement of a 14:1 student-to-full-time faculty ratio on the McMinnville campus. The third is the budgetary absorption of operating as new facilities on the Keck campus come on line. For FY2003-04, those facilities include the new library and new theatre.

Each of these items has a history. For instance, with respect to compensation, a trustee-endorsed goal has not been met of reaching the 80th percentile of AAUP Category IIB institutions for all three faculty ranks in compensation, exclusive of tuition remission and tuition exchange, by the end of the 2002-03 academic year. The college is farther from this goal than it was in 2000, the year in which it was adopted by the trustees. The other two employee groups, administrators and LEA, have established salary goals, but not total compensation goals, for there is not comparable benchmark compensation data available, as for the faculty. In an effort to assure comparability of progress toward compensation goals, the trustees have recently (May 2003) established a compensation sub-committee of the Executive Committee.

Following expansion of the student body, in the early 1990’s (from 1200 FTE to 1500 FTE), the college’s strategic planning initiative determined that the FTE ration of students to full-time faculty had risen from 14.9:1 in 1990 to 16.25:1 in 1995. Despite the addition of 12.5 FTE faculty over that interval, full-time faculty resources were actually thinner on a per capita basis than they were prior to the growth in the student body. Determined not to repeat this history with respect to the expansion toward 1750 FTE, the Planning Council has endorsed a goal of attaining a student to full-time faculty ratio of 14:1. Between 1998-99, our last full-scale visit, and 2002-03, the full-time faculty on the McMinnville campus has grown by seven. Student FTE has dropped (1657 to 1630) over
that same period, resulting in a lowering of the student to full-time faculty ratio from 15.6:1 in 1998-99 to 14.5:1 in 2002-03.

Absorbing the operating costs of new and remodeled buildings has been a serious challenge for Linfield. An ambitious comprehensive capital campaign, “The Defining Moment,” has provided resources for expansion into newly remodeled Keck campus academic facilities, but the operating budget increases have been left to the normal budget process. For FY 2003-04 over $300,000 of new positions and operating expense have been provided for the library and theatre facilities.

After working with multiple long-range budget planning models, the Planning Council concluded that the college could not proceed simultaneously to meet compensation goals, reduce the student-to-full-time faculty ratio, and absorb new facilities. It is against this backdrop that the October 16, 2002, Planning Council resolution must be read.

In curricular matters, the Planning Council constituted and received the report from an ad hoc Experiential Learning Task Force. It recognized during deliberations over the new major in Environmental Studies the important role this program would have in fulfilling a major objective of the strategic agenda—namely, Strategy III, Goal 2: “Revitalize and re-imagine the traditional disciplines and support those interdisciplinary programs that will particularly benefit from Linfield’s setting and traditions, exploit existing interests and skills among our faculty, and provide a competitive advance in the recruitment of new students.”

A vital component of strategic planning is the annual Linfield College: Institutional Data, a Fact Book (See Exhibit 1G). Compiled by the Office of Institutional Research, the fact book is distributed to all academic departments, administrative department heads, and members of the Planning Council.

Even though the Planning Council includes membership from the Portland campus, its first years of deliberation have focused primarily on McMinnville campus issues. The Portland campus has been in a steady state relative to McMinnville, for Portland facilities are controlled by our partner, Legacy Health Systems. With the recent call by the Oregon League of Nursing to double nursing enrollments, the Portland campus has engaged a consultant to help launch a major planning initiative focused on that campus (see Exhibit 1I).

As a consequence of the recommendations focused on the Division of Continuing Education from the last full-scale accreditation report, the Planning Council requested and received a study of the fully-loaded costs of the DCE Program. Its conclusion was that DCE revenue, even when indirect costs of operation are fully accounted for, remains a key component in stabilizing the college’s overall operating budget. That said, concerns continue with respect to the increasing competition in adult education from regional sister colleges, from private for-profit entities, and from national online degree programs. (See DCE discussion in part 2, immediately following.)
In sum, the college now has a process that institutionalizes the linking of planning, budgeting, and assessment. What the most recent evaluation committee witnessed—a comprehensive, exhaustive and, frankly, exhausting effort involving 13 ad hoc referral groups reporting to a temporary Augmented Planning Group—has been replaced by permanent structural modifications in our way of conducting everyday operations. The Planning Council is delineated in the *Faculty Handbook* and draws representatives from all college constituencies, save the alumni. The council receives annual reports from all college units, recommends budget priorities to the Budget Advisory Committee, refers issues from that committee to the relevant deliberative bodies, and orchestrates college-wide discussion on fundamental goals such as optimal enrollment and desired student to full-time faculty ratios. At fall of 2003 the council will be in dialogue with the community about its ideas for revising the strategic agenda, so that in the 2004-05 academic year, the trustees will be asked to approve *Planning for the Future: The Linfield College Strategic Agenda 2005-2010*. The first step in this process may be found in Exhibit 1H, representing the fruits of the council’s spring 2003 deliberations over progress in meeting the goals of the 2000-2005 agenda.

**Accreditation Recommendations for the Division of Continuing Education**

A second set of recommendations from the 1998 Evaluation Committee commissioned by the Northwest Association of Colleges and Universities dealt with the college’s Division of Continuing Education Program. Following is the text in full from p. 38 of the Evaluation Committee report:

The Committee recommends that Linfield address the deficits in the Division of Continuing Education listed below:

—2.G.3. Full-time faculty representing the appropriate disciplines and fields of work are not involved in the systemic recruiting, staffing, or oversight of Linfield’s continuing education and special learning activities.

—2.G.4. The responsibility for the faculty-based administration of continuing education and special learning activities is clearly not defined as revealed by the institution’s own *Self Study* (page 132).

—4.A.2. Full time (sic) residential faculty do not systemically participate in academic planning, curriculum review, advising and any meaningful governance at all in regard to the DCE.

—4.A.5. The full time (sic) residential faculty do not provide for regular and systematic evaluation of faculty performance in the DCE.

—4.A.10. The institution has failed to demonstrate that it periodically assesses institution policies concerning the use of adjunct faculty within the DCE.

The college addressed these items in its *Report for the Commission on Colleges, Northwest Association of Schools and Universities, Focused Interim Evaluation, October 25, 1999*. Rather
than repeat this full narrative, we here summarize the additions and modifications made since 1999.

**Measures to Address Recommendation Based on Standard 2.G.3**

*Hewlett Foundation Grant*

Three DCE adjunct faculty members took part in training sessions along with on-campus faculty for the Inquiry Seminars in the summer of 2000. These workshops were funded by a Hewlett Foundation grant. The faculty have created and taught several IQS courses for DCE.

*DCE liaison*

This position was created to encourage full-time faculty to become more engaged with DCE. The chair of each department with courses offered by DCE is asked to name a liaison. Often the chair is the liaison but not always. DCE provides the names, contact information, and email addresses of all adjunct faculty members to the respective liaison and encourages them to be in contact with their off-campus colleagues.

The liaison is expected to:

- review minimum credentials for each course, modifying as necessary
- review prospective faculty credentials and approve to teach specific courses
- orient new faculty to Linfield & department
- review and approve required texts
- review faculty teaching evaluations and advise DCE director
- keep adjuncts informed of curricular and departmental issues
- represent his/her department at DCE’s fall faculty workshop
- assist in development and approval of new courses
- advocate for DCE and its faculty in departmental matters.

In exchange for these duties, the liaisons receive an annual stipend, calculated by the number or courses, adjuncts, and activity in the department. These range from a minimum of $300 to several thousand dollars.

**Evaluation Review**

Each DCE instructor, including full-time faculty who teach for DCE, is evaluated in every course every term. These evaluations are reviewed by the director, with copies sent to the department liaison and faculty member. Both are asked to return a form to DCE indicating they have reviewed the evaluations.

**Measures to Address Recommendation Based on Standard 2.G.4**

*Continuing Education Committee*

This committee was formed in 1999 in response to the Evaluation Committee report. It
is a standing committee of the Faculty Assembly (see Faculty Handbook III.1.5) and meets monthly. Its members represent all divisions of the college and report back to their home divisions. It advises the director in policy matters, curricular changes, and long-range planning. It also recommends policy and procedure modifications.

For example, the new RN to BSN Program was discussed with the committee when proposed by the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing in fall of 2002. After thoughtful questioning and reflection, the committee recommended that this program be pursued and continued to review and advise as the plans developed throughout 2002-03.

Plans to expand course offerings during the summer were reviewed by the committee to ensure that this did not conflict with on-campus goals and programs. The committee members reported to their divisions and answered questions raised by other faculty members.

DCE proposed a change in its winter term schedule. Although this was an administrative rather than curricular matter, the DCE Committee’s discussions with members of their divisions raised several important policy and procedural issues that needed to be addressed before the change was implemented. This committee is working well and provides the oversight, advice, and interaction that were missing from the former committee structure.

**Measures to Address Recommendation Based on Standard 4.A.2**

The creation of the Continuing Education Committee has brought full-time faculty into systematic participation in academic planning, curriculum review, and governance of the program. This review has reinforced the consideration that DCE, like any other unit of the college, must have its course and major proposals approved by the college-wide curriculum committee.

Full-time faculty members do not serve as academic advisors to DCE students, for the college maintains a staff of full-time advisors in the various DCE locations. Faculty members do, however, set the requirements for all academic programs of the colleges, and all advisors—faculty and administrators alike—must adhere to these requirements.

**Measures to Address Recommendation Based on Standard 4.A.5**

DCE is concerned exclusively with quality of teaching by its adjunct faculty, because tenure and service are not at issue. The review of adjunct faculty is an on-going process by the director and the department liaison. We have instituted the use of forms to track the liaisons’ review of all adjunct evaluations.

**Measures to Address Recommendation Based on Standard 4.A.10**

The Continuing Education Committee will begin to address the policy of adjunct faculty use in DCE at its September 2003 meeting. While we seek congruence among the
policies of the McMinnville campus, Portland campus, and DCE, there may be good reasons for variations. We expect to send a recommendation to the dean by the end of the year.

Other Changes in DCE

At the last full-scale accreditation review, Linfield College had continuing education centers in eight cities and towns, including Longview, the sole site in the state of Washington. Due to declining enrollments and a desire to focus resources exclusively within the state of Oregon, Linfield terminated the Longview center in fall of 2002. Due notification was given to our campus partner, Southwest Washington Community College, and to students in the program, who were given the option of transferring to another program or continuing with Linfield through the Portland center. Though not directly related to the concerns about lack of oversight addressed by the 1998 Evaluation Committee, this change has freed up resources to devote to Linfield’s other centers. The Longview site was especially burdensome, because it required the college to file an extensive report, biennially, to obtain endorsement from the state of Washington’s Higher Education Coordinating Board. The considerable staff time devoted to this effort now goes elsewhere.

In sum, the Linfield Division of Continuing Education continues to offer place-bound adults opportunities for degrees in six majors, one minor, and a variety of certificate programs (see 2003-2004 Course Catalog, p. 147). In addition, it has recently assumed responsibility as a partner in delivering the existing RN to BSN program of the Linfield-Good Samaritan School of Nursing to place-bound adults. As with all Linfield degrees, the standards for the RN to BSN program lie entirely in the hands of the full-time nursing faculty, who are involved in selection and evaluation of all adjunct faculty members whether they teach in Portland or in Bend.