PART B: QUESTIONS RELATED TO OTHER INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

B1 Standard One—Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness

Changes in Institutional Mission and Goals.

During the 1998 full-scale accreditation visit, Linfield operated under a mission statement adopted in 1983. That statement served the college well, but the exhaustive planning process accompanying the 1998 self-study identified a need for revision in light of Planning for the Future: The Linfield College Strategic Agenda, 2000-2005 (See Exhibit 1A), approved by the Board of Trustees on November 6, 1999. That document contained a “vision statement” refined from multiple meetings conducted by the vice president for academic affairs with faculty, administrative staff, representatives of the Linfield Employees’ Association, alumni, trustees, and students. That vision statement reads as follows:

Linfield College is dedicated to a vision of learning that celebrates both the theoretical and the practical. We emphasize that liberal education is the best preparation for life as well as for future employment. Our curriculum is designed with breadth across fields as well as depth in a major to produce those skills and traits of character that the world will always need: the ability to write, think, and speak clearly, the curiosity to inspire a lifetime of learning, the determination to persist in the face of difficulty, the capacity to work productively as a member of a team, the resolve to lead when leadership is demanded, the wisdom to embrace people from different cultures and with different understandings of the world, the commitment to engage in the public debate, and the courage to stand respectfully yet firmly for moral principle and spiritual freedom of conscience.

The strategic agenda also called for creation of a permanent and broadly representative Planning Council. In the early stages of its deliberations, the Planning Council asked the trustees to appoint a Mission Statement Revision Committee for the express task of proposing a new statement. Board Chairperson Richard Ice appointed the committee in April 2001, requesting a draft mission statement for trustee review by February 2002. The revision committee met that deadline, resulting in the following new mission statement, approved by the trustees on May 4, 2002:

Linfield College advances a vision of learning, life, and community that

- promotes intellectual challenge and creativity,
- values both theoretical and practical knowledge,
- engages thoughtful dialogue in a climate of mutual respect,
- honors the rich texture of diverse cultures and varied ways of understanding piques curiosity for a lifetime of inquiry,
- and inspires the courage to live by moral and spiritual principle and to defend freedom of conscience.
Concise Statement

Linfield: Connecting Learning, Life, and Community
Organization and Governance

Linfield College is a four-year, non-profit, coeducational, liberal arts institution historically and currently affiliated with the American Baptist Churches. All college operations are governed by administration and faculty, with ultimate responsibility resting with the Board of Trustees. The college is committed to the teaching of undergraduates in an atmosphere of academic freedom that fosters intellectual rigor, creativity, and a sense of personal and social responsibility.

Community response to the new mission statement has been positive. The new statement is succinct, eight lines as opposed to the 42 lines of the previous statement. In addition, the concise version has distilled the essence of “The Linfield Experience” in a way that students, faculty, and alumni across the generations all seem to recognize and approve. Ultimately, the new mission statement stands as testimony to the wisdom of the college’s original 1998 resolve to let the self-study process inform planning, which in its turn disclosed the need for a mission statement reflecting a re-invigorated new vision for the college.

Achievements of the Existing Plan and Formulation of New Plans

Many of the goals of the strategic agenda have been fulfilled: e.g., creation of the Planning Council, commissioning of and reporting to the Faculty Assembly by the Experiential Learning Task Force, recording of substantial progress toward the 14:1 student-to-full-time-faculty ratio, absorption of the Keck campus operating costs into the annual budget, and a systematizing of assessment, planning and budgeting. (The fall 2003 Planning Council report on achievements of and proposed revisions to the strategic agenda is available as Exhibit 1H.)

Having reviewed accomplishments and remaining challenges from the previous agenda, the Planning Council is well on its way to revising the strategic agenda for 2005-10. While recognizing that many of the college’s strengths flow from Linfield’s fundamentally egalitarian ethos, the Planning Council seeks to provoke discussion on supplementing this ethos with an accompanying ethos of rewarding excellence in circumstances where quality should be prized above equality.

Succinct Description of Planning and Effectiveness.

As the commission standards in this area were the main focus of a major recommendation from the evaluation committee, Part A above discusses the college’s progress in some detail.

Institutional Expectations for Planning and Effectiveness.

Please also refer to Part A above.