This is the first of a nine-part series highlighting each standard.

The latest Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Accreditation Handbook begins with this rationale for the process: “Accreditation is a process of recognizing educational institutions for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public.” By undertaking this voluntary effort, Linfield assumes responsibility for demonstrating how the college fulfills and achieves – or plans to achieve – expected levels of performance within the context of our mission.

As a community, then, we are tasked to report on and evaluate Linfield according to nine standards identified by the Northwest Commission. Each of those standards consists of related performance measures, some of which overlap. The various members of the Accreditation Steering Committee oversee the discussions and assessment efforts related to each standard and have already formed working groups to investigate college practice in their assigned areas.

Standard One – Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness

Here the college is asked to examine its mission and goals in the context of ongoing planning to support them. In addressing this standard, Standard One co-chairs Chris Keaveney (Modern Languages) and Bernie Turner (Trustee emeritus) will look for evidence that the mission and goals are widely understood by the campus, appear in appropriate institutional publications, inform educational activities and admissions policies, guide the selection of faculty, determine allocation of resources, and direct planning efforts.

Since the standard also asks whether the college periodically reexamines its mission, we will also explore the impact of the recent revision process leading to the current mission statement. Did this effort result in a more widely shared understanding of the college mission and goals? Are those goals clear? Do they influence further planning for the direction of the college into the future?

Standard One places a high priority on the planning processes of the institution and their relationship to its advancement of its mission. To that end it calls for a clearly integrated informational loop linking diagnosed need, planning, implementation, and assessment. Accreditors seek assurance that our planning process prompts us as a community to analyze where we are, where we want to be, and how we might best get there: do we continuously ask questions of ourselves, seek answers, and revise our goals, policies, and practices accordingly?

To satisfy Standard One, then, the college must demonstrate that it engages in systematic and transparent planning, clearly defines its evaluation criteria for those plans it adopts, and fosters broadbased participation in its planning efforts.

Supporting documentation substantiating our compliance with this Standard will include:

• An official statement of the mission, including explanation of how and when it was developed, approved and communicated to the college’s constituencies;
• Evidence providing analysis and appraisal of the outcomes produced by our mission-driven activities;
• Copies of our short term, strategic and long term planning documents;
• Planning studies;
• Prior enrollment and future enrollment projections;
• Program and personnel needs assessments;

...See Standards on page 2
Emergent strategic issues raised by Accreditation

These notes summarize what the members of the Accreditation Steering Committee believe to be emergent strategic issues raised by the evaluative process they have already begun with their various working groups. They are not meant to be exhaustive or determinant; they serve mainly to continue the education of the entire Linfield community about the scope of the accreditation process and the unique opportunity it provides to identify ways we can begin immediately to strengthen the institution. See the Accreditation website (under “Academic Affairs”) for expanded information about each standard.

**STANDARD I** (Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning, Effectiveness) asks:
- How well is the college meeting its declared mission?
- How well does it have a planning process in place to inform its efforts?
- How well does it have assessment practices in place to adapt its plans/practices?

**Emergent Strategic Questions:**
- Does the relatively new mission statement fit who we really are?
- How familiar are employees in all sectors with the college mission statement?
- How well integrated are our mission statement, institutional goals, and actual practices?
- How well do we link planning and assessment?
- How does the developing strategic plan make such linkages overt and meaningful?

**STANDARD II** (Educational Program and Effectiveness) asks:
- What is the quality of the curriculum and instruction at the college?
- How well integrated are the various sectors of the college in delivering the educational program?
- Are sufficient resources available to deliver that program satisfactorily?

**Emergent Strategic Questions:**
- How are we planning for teaching facilities suited to the next generation of learners?
- How do we plan for the impact of and opportunities around electronic curriculum delivery?
- How do we ensure sufficient faculty development support associated with ongoing curricular changes and faculty turnover?
- How do we develop a more comprehensive institutional assessment of student learning?
- How do we assess/ensure congruence with the evolving character of distance learning programs and the traditional educational mission of the college?
- Should the role of full time faculty in DCE be assessed differently from its current status as “service”?
- How do we expand study abroad resources to keep pace with the growth in the student body and a “foundational principle” highlighting global education as a priority?

**STANDARD III** (Students) asks:
- How does the college ensure quality support services to the student body?
- How clearly are policies and procedures involving student life articulated and implemented?
- Are sufficient resources available for student life programming?
- How are transfer credits handled to facilitate smooth movement across institutions?
- How well does the mission of the college intersect with student life programming?
- What is the fit between the athletics program and the educational agenda of the college?
Emergent Strategic Questions:

• How do we identify the characteristics of today’s student population and accompanying support needs from the student life arm of the college?
• Does student access to the governance structure of the college need improvement?
• Do we need a clearer definition of student rights and responsibilities (ranging from enhanced safety and security to heightened commitment to academic integrity)?
• How do we put in place a more comprehensive assessment of our institutional performance in the areas encompassed under this standard (e.g. athletics; registrar’s office; student services; admissions; financial aid; advising; counseling; career services; etc.).
• How do we put in place a more comprehensive assessment of our institutional performance in the areas encompassed under this standard (e.g. athletics; registrar’s office; student services; admissions; financial aid; advising; counseling; career services; etc.).
• How well do our admissions policies support the institutional mission? How should those policies evolve to reflect an increased emphasis on diversity? How will the institution define “diversity” in the near future?

STANDARD IV (Faculty) asks:

• How are faculty (including adjuncts) recruited/hired; compensated; evaluated; supported professionally commensurate with the institutional criteria for evaluation?
• How is faculty load determined and distributed?
• Is the faculty of sufficient size and quality to realize the college’s educational mission and goals?

Emergent Strategic Questions:

• How does the institution address concerns within the faculty around compensation and work load, particularly as we inch closer toward the 1750 financial FTE (translated into approx. 1840 student head count)? How much adjunct reliance should we accept?
• How well are current tenure and promotion practices working?
• What is the optimal character of shared “institutional governance” practices at Linfield?
• What does the Fall 2006 faculty survey tell us about the above questions and other faculty concerns?

• How do we incorporate the instructional associates’ category into this evaluative mix?

STANDARD V (Library and Information Technology) asks:

• How well do the library and technology services support teaching/learning/research?
• How well do their available resources support their respective roles in the institutional mission?

Emergent Strategic Questions:

• How does each unit work with faculty to address these questions?
• What next steps should each unit take to support emergent intersections between technology and its attendant pedagogical innovations?
• How does the library constructively engage the expanding primacy of the worldwide web in its mission of ensuring “informationally literate” graduates?
• How does the library manage the fluidity and instability of scholarship access in an increasingly digitized (but unarchived) academic publishing scene?
• How does the library plan for the budgetary challenges of maintaining/expanding IT and library support for faculty, students, and administration?

STANDARD VI (Governance and Administration) asks:

• How do the various governance arms of the college intersect with one another?
• How does each arm of the governance structure function internally?
• How does the Board operate in terms of shared governance?

Emergent Strategic Questions:

• How can communication across constituencies be improved?
• How can faculty governance structures/practices be strengthened and improved?
• Is the Board’s size and structure conducive to its meeting its fiduciary responsibilities?
• How can we improve/revise the administrative structure of the college to enhance governance?
• How do we assess the effectiveness of the PACCON comparative data across constituencies?
STANDARD VII (Finance) asks:
• Is the college practicing good accounting practices?
• Are internal checks and balances in place in managing the assets of the college?
• Are the financial resources of the college adequate to its mission?

Emergent Strategic Questions:
• What should be the future relationship between the McMinnville and Portland Campus budgets?
• How does the college reduce reliance on DCE net revenue?

STANDARD VIII (Physical Resources) asks:
• Are our financial and physical resources adequate for our mission?
• How well are we attending to changing facilities needs in service to our educational goals?
• How well are we planning for and executing modernization on existing assets?
• How are we managing our equipment needs?

Emergent Strategic Questions:
• How are we planning to update older facilities?
• What new resource needs have been generated by a physical plant 50% bigger than in 1998?

STANDARD IX (Institutional Integrity) asks:
• How well do the institution’s communications accurately and consistently present the mission to its various constituencies?
• How well is the institution protecting academic freedom?
• How well is the college protecting against conflict of interest?
• How well do institutional policies articulate our legal and ethical obligations/standards?
• How well disseminated are those policies?

Emergent Strategic Questions:
• Are we living up to our professed policies and standards?
• How do we ensure the quality of the degree in all sectors of the institution?
• How do we include external professional codes of conduct within the institution’s ethical and legal policies and practices?

Members of the Accreditation Committee

Chair: Barbara Seidman; co-chair Dan Preston

Standard I: Institutional Mission
Co-chairs: Planning Council members Bernie Turner (trustee) and Dr. Chris Keaveney (MLA)

Standard II: Educational Program
Co-chairs: Dr. Barbara Seidman (Interim Dean of Faculty) and Dr. William Millar (REL)

Standard III: Students
Chair: Dan Preston, Dean of Enrollment Services

Standard IV: Faculty
Co-chairs: Dr. Brenda DeVore Marshall (TCA) and Dr. Pam Wheeler (NUR)

Standard V: Library/Information Resources
Chair: Susan Whyte, College Librarian

Standard VI: Governance and Administration
Co-Chairs: FEC chair Dr. Amy Orr (SOAN) and Dr. Liz Atkinson, Associate Dean of Faculty

Standard VII: Finance
Chair: Greg Copeland, College Controller

Standard VIII: Physical Resources
Co-chairs: John Hall, Facilities Director, and Dr. Jeff Summers, Associate Dean of Faculty

Standard IX: Institutional Integrity
Chair: Pam Jacklin, J.D. (trustee)

Committee Staff
Jennifer Ballard, Assistant Registrar for Institutional Research

To learn more...
To learn more about the accreditation process, or to read the 1998 report, 1999 interim report or the 2003 visit report, or to see other materials that are available about the accreditation, go to:
http://www.linfield.edu/accreditation/index.php and click on “Resources.”

“Education is not filling a bucket but lighting a fire.” Yeats