

Accreditation *Update*

A monthly update for the Linfield College Community • Volume 2, Issue 3, January 2008

A closer look at the Accreditation Standards

This is the fifth of a nine-part series highlighting each accreditation 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 Five – Library and Information Resources

Accreditation Standard Five calls for an evaluation of the college's library and information resources to assure the support of teaching, learning and research in ways consistent with Linfield's mission and goals. Services must be adequate and at a level appropriate to the degrees offered. Library and information resources should support the intellectual, cultural and technical development of Linfield students wherever they matriculate and whatever method of instructional delivery upon which they rely.

Standard Five defines information resources and services as including all libraries, instructional media and production centers, computer centers, networks, telecommunications facilities, and any other repositories of information. To comply with Standard Five, the college is expected to possess sufficient holdings, equipment and personnel in these areas to support Linfield's mission and goals. It evaluates the college's financial support for library and information resources and services, including maintenance and security needs.

The library's core collection and related resources should be sufficient to support the curriculum as determined by the nature of Linfield's various academic pro-

grams and their locations. Library and information resources and services should foster effective and independent use of these resources by students, faculty, and staff. The selection, organization, and maintenance of equipment and materials should also support the college's educational program.

Standard Five stipulates that the college is expected to adopt policies and procedures for the systematic development and management of information resources. It should publicly document these policies and procedures, keep them updated, and make them known and available to its various constituents. Faculty, staff and students should have opportunities to participate in the planning and development of these resources and services. Computing and communications services should effectively extend information retrieval from outside sources.

The facilities that support Linfield's library and information services should be adequate to the resources, equipment and personnel involved. Access by students, faculty and staff should be readily available both on campus and, as required, off-campus. Cooperative arrangements with other organizations must rest upon formal and documented agreements that complement rather than substitute for the adequacy and

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accessibility of the college's own core collection and resources.

Linfield is also expected to employ a sufficient number of library and information resources staff to provide adequate assistance to the various campus communities they serve. This presumes the hiring of qualified professional and technical support staff with the required specific competencies who perform clearly defined duties. Standard Five also measures institutional inclusion of these staff members in curriculum development.

Similarly, the college should provide professional development opportunities for library and information resources staff.

The administrative organization of library and information services should recognize and enhance service linkages among their shared and complementary functions (library, computing resources,

instructional media, telecommunications centers).

Planning for and evaluation of library and information resources should look closely at those activities supporting teaching and learning functions of the college by facilitating the research and scholarship of students and faculty. The college should regularly assess the quality, accessibility and use of library and information resources and services to determine their effectiveness in supporting the educational program.

The planning process should involve users of services along with library and information resources personnel. Evaluation should involve library and information resources at all locations where courses, programs and degrees are offered, and findings should be used to improve effectiveness.

Supporting Documentation for Standard Five (an incomplete list):

- printed materials that describe for students the hours and services available
- policies, regulations and procedures for the development and management of library and information resources
- various statistics about library holding and use of services
- assessment of the adequacy of facilities in relation to goals of the library and information services
- staffing data
- comprehensive budget(s)
- CV's of library staff
- computer usage statistics
- studies or documents describing the evaluation of library and information resources

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."