

REPORT OF THE WASC VISITING TEAM  
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW

To Brigham Young University - Hawaii

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Team Roster

Stan D. Gaede, Chair, Gordon College  
April Komenaka Scazzola, Assistant Chair, University of Hawaii at Hilo  
Bobby Fong, Butler University  
Michael L. Jackson, University of Southern California  
Gregory B. White, Notre Dame de Namur University

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## **I. Overview and Context**

### **I.A. Institution, Visit, and New Leadership**

**The Institution.** Brigham Young University Hawaii (BYU-Hawaii) is a liberal arts institution operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). Situated in Laie, Hawaii, the university was founded in 1955 as Church College of Hawaii, a two-year institution. It was redefined as a four-year liberal arts institution in 1961 and given its present name in 1974. The institution is part of a three-campus system governed by the Board of Trustees, who are general officers of the LDS Church. The President of BYU-Hawaii reports to the Board of Trustees. The current president has served since June 2007.

BYU-Hawaii declares its central commitment “to prepare students for a life of learning and service in an expanding international church” (*General Catalog 2007-08*). While its particular mission is to serve students from Asia and Pacific, the geographic range of BYU-Hawaii students is extensive: in Fall 2007 of 2,312 fulltime students, approximately 48.1 percent come from 70 other nations. Fulltime faculty number 122; the university’s student-faculty ratio is presently 17:1.

BYU-Hawaii offers BA and BS degrees in a number of majors, the BSW degree in Social Work and a BFA in Fine Arts. The School of Education is accredited by the (Hawaii) State Approved Teacher Education board, and the BSW program by the Council on Social Work Education. The School of Business is preparing for accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. The School of Computing is preparing to seek accreditation by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

BYU-Hawaii was accredited by WASC as a two-year institution in 1959, then as a four-year institution in 1961. Accreditation has been reaffirmed in 1964, 1972, 1976, 1981, 1986, and 1996. The current review cycle began with Commission acceptance of the institutional proposal in 2003; the Capacity and Preparatory Review was completed in 2006.

**The Site Visit.** The Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) team received the university's Educational Effectiveness report in January 2008 and met by conference call on February 26. The team arrived on campus in March 26 and departed on March 28. During the visit, the team had access to many documents and reports in the team room. The team met with the president, vice president for academics, vice president for student life; the President's Advisory Council; the Organizational Design Team; deans and representatives of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Schools of Education, Business, and Computing; the General Education, Assessment, and L2 committees; six academic departments; and eight support units. Team members also held open meetings with faculty, staff, and students, and viewed presentations on departmental assessment activities.

The on-site interviews, presentations, meetings, and documents in the team room confirmed many of the general remarks made in the report, corrected some of the team's inferences, and provided us with crucial new information.

**New Leadership.** The defining event of the two years since the CPR visit, one that will shape BYU-Hawaii for years to come, has been the recent change in university leadership. The former president announced his retirement in winter 2007, his successor

arrived in June 2007, and a new vice president for academics was scheduled to begin in mid-April 2008.

The new president arrived with a mandate from the Board of Trustees to improve instruction and to reduce costs. He is cultivating closer ties to the other members of the Brigham Young University system while retaining the institution's commitment to serving students from Asia and the Pacific. He has instituted three councils to assist him: the President's Council (vice presidents, chief information officer, and assistant to the president), the President's Advisory Council (faculty representatives and directors of key support units), and the University Council (deans and directors of all support units).

The new president is making or proposing changes that are likely to have substantial impact on all aspects of the university, including the university's continued progress in the four theme areas and the four areas of Commission concern. For example, effective January 2009, the university will go from an academic schedule of two 15-week semesters plus two 7-1/2 week summer terms to a schedule of two 13-1/2 week semesters with three 7 week summer terms. (Total contact hours per semester are somewhat higher in the new schedule.) Effective Fall 2007, the minimum TOEFL score for admission for non-native speakers of English was raised to 500—a change that is already affecting international student enrollment. And it is expected that as early as Fall 2008, prospective students in LDS congregations in Asia and the Pacific will be offered the opportunity to complete required courses in English as an International Language and in General Education by distance delivery in their home countries before enrolling at the Laie campus.

## **I.B. Quality of the Institutional Report and Alignment with Proposal**

The EER team found that the institution's Educational Effectiveness Review report was aligned with the proposal, addressing each of the four themes selected by the institution and the four major recommendations laid out by the Commission in its July 6, 2006 action letter.

Faculty, staff, and administrators contributed to the report, with faculty responsible for three of the four thematic chapters that constituted the main body of the report. These chapters were largely narrative in structure, with some unevenness in the presentation and analysis of data. Nevertheless, the team saw that the institution has sought to develop mechanisms for sustained and meaningful assessment of student learning in the General Education program, academic program review, and English language acquisition, and that it continues to strengthen its student employment and returnability policies and practices.

The institution reported a vigorous response to one of the Commission's major recommendations, that pertaining to the need for faculty and staff housing. However, the institution had responded in only modest ways to the recommendations about teaching loads, women in leadership, and strategic planning.

The EER team has inferred that the rather limited progress noted in the EE report might be ascribed to the need to adjust to the changes imposed by the new president and a widespread desire to see what other new directions will be dictated.

## **I.C. Update on Key Issues Identified in the Capacity and Preparatory Review**

Since Commission acceptance of the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) report in June 2006, the change of presidents appears to have slowed the institution's responses to the four recommendations made by the CPR visiting team and endorsed in the June 2006 Commission action letter. What follows are the 2006 recommendations and the EER team's assessment of how BYU-Hawaii has responded:

1. *The team recommends that the institution continue to pursue solutions to the housing issue in order to support the recruitment and retention of quality faculty and staff.*

As late as the eve of the EER team visit, plans were proceeding to demolish 25 homes built on double lots and to erect 50 new homes on that land. A real estate holding company associated with the LDS Church, however, was unable to obtain permits to build low-income housing on land owned by the church, and it was decided that a more comprehensive construction project on university property should be considered. The plan for building 50 homes was shelved, and discussions are underway to permit occupants of the present 25 homes on Moana Street to buy them, as well as to offer purchase options on townhouses in the university's current housing stock. These discussions were occurring during the team visit.

2. *The team recommends that the institution formally restructure teaching loads to bring itself into alignment with institutions that require scholarly activity of its faculty. More normative for research-active faculty at universities that have a primary commitment to teaching would be a nine-hour load with a three-hour release for research.*

Faculty at BYU-Hawaii are expected to teach the equivalent of four three-hour courses in each of two semesters, and most choose to teach two three-hour courses in one of the university's summer terms. Effectively, the standard faculty load is thirty semester hours annually. Research-active faculty can obtain a one- or two-course release per academic year to pursue scholarly projects, but this has generally meant that they still teach 24 to 27 hours annually. The CPR team had noted that both the normal teaching load and the load for research-active faculty at BYU-Hawaii were heavier than at peer institutions with a primary commitment to teaching.

It is the considered judgment of the BYU-Hawaii president that the CPR team's recommendation on teaching loads is neither fiscally possible nor necessary in light of the university's teaching mission. Indeed, discussion is under way to increase the student-faculty ratio from 17:1 to 22:1 in an effort to meet the Board of Trustees directive that the university seek ways to lower the costs of education. The EER team expresses its concern that increasing the student-faculty ratio would not only further inhibit the capacity of BYU-Hawaii faculty to do scholarship but strain their ability to teach effectively. This issue is discussed further under our discussion of Standard Two.

- 3. The team recommends that the institution cultivate leadership skills and aspirations among their women faculty, and find more productive means of recruiting and retaining qualified women and persons from underrepresented groups for fulltime faculty positions.*

Over the last two years, the university has been able to add female faculty members and male faculty members of color. Female faculty and administrative staff have formed an Academic Women's Network that meets informally and makes recommendations to the Vice President for Academics. As a consequence of the group's activities, female faculty have attended meetings of the American Association of University Women and the Higher Education Resource Services Summer Institute at Bryn Mawr. Retention of faculty continues to be of concern, given the acknowledged lack of affordable housing (cf. Recommendation #1 above) and lack of opportunities for faculty spouses. The EER team suggests that, additionally, the faculty work load expectations may impel faculty to seek positions elsewhere. The current Vice President for Academics, who has served seventeen years, is leaving his position in April, and the BYU-Hawaii community is waiting to see how his successor will build on this legacy, in particular with regard to initiatives to diversify the faculty.

4. *The team recommends that the institution make periodic reports to the campus community on the objectives of the strategic plan to affirm the progress that has been made. Given that the plan is due to expire in 2007, it would be timely to begin discussion of the next five-year plan for 2007-2012.*

Given the announcement of the past president's departure and the recent ascension of the current president, the 2002-2007 strategic plan was not aggressively pursued. The president has realigned committees and employed a consultant to restructure institutional planning in light of Board of Trustees directives that BYU-

Hawaii continue to improve the quality of the broad educational experience and lower the cost of education per FTE student to the Church (which underwrote 81.8% of the university's FY 2007 operating expenses). An Organizational Design Team, comprised of faculty, one administrator, and administrative staff, has been appointed and is at work on a proposal for reorganization that will be the basis for strategic planning. A report on the *Status of Strategic Planning* was made available to the team when it arrived for the site visit. Aspects of institutional planning have been shared with the BYU-Hawaii community since January, but this effort is still in its early stages.

The current administration is in formation: the new president is still putting together his leadership team, learning the university, and adjusting governance structures. Beyond the responses to the four recommendations of the CPR team, the university has not had time to declare definitively its strategic direction.

**Recommendation:**

Continue efforts to hire and retain the very best faculty by moving ahead with faculty housing efforts, making workload adjustments to increase and reward research and scholarship, and improve opportunities for advancement for women and underrepresented minority groups

## **II. Evaluation of Educational Effectiveness**

### **II.A. The Institution's Educational Effectiveness Inquiry and Systems for Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness and Learning Results**

BYU-Hawaii has structured the entire accreditation review process to develop, examine, and evaluate its methods of assessing student learning and teaching effectiveness. Each of the four themes of the ongoing self-study addresses a student learning issue of central concern to the institution and its mission. Thus, in evaluating the inquiry, the EER team is also evaluating the systems by which this inquiry has been managed and by which the institution can continue to monitor its own success and that of its students.

#### **Theme One: General Education Assessment**

As noted in the EER report, BYU-Hawaii's "General Education program has been substantially revised since our last accreditation [in 1996]. This process has generated university-wide discussion of the purposes and content of GE at BYU-Hawaii. It has also laid the foundation for continuous improvement." Those two sentences capture well the history of GE at BYU-Hawaii over the last decade.

The General Education Committee, comprised of representatives of many departments and chaired by the associate dean of arts and sciences, has led the process. In 2001, seven qualities of a "generally-educated person" were identified. These assumed that such a person would pursue truth, communicate effectively, solve problems, respond aesthetically, behave ethically, integrate socially, and be globally responsible (CFR 2.2).

Since 2003, the GE committee has worked persistently and with some success with various departments to set performance benchmarks and to find reliable and valid

instruments to assess student performance (CFR 2.3, 2.4), beginning with two of the qualities, effective communication and problem solving. A Writing Assessment Group (WAG) developed and tested a rubric to be used to assess written communication skills across disciplines, the benchmarks being analysis, coherence, language, and documentation. The WAG has suspended activities until 2008-2009. All natural science departments and the mathematics department have joined in the effort to assess problem-solving skills; preliminary results are promising. An interdisciplinary (IDS) capstone course has also been piloted, offered in multiple sections with themes that vary with the interests of the instructors, requiring written assignments and, often, group projects and oral presentations. The pilot writing assessment effort was inconclusive because written assignments varied from section to section, and apparently assessment efforts have ceased for the time being in the IDS courses.

The report does not describe efforts to “close the loop” – that is, to use even preliminary assessment findings to modify learning opportunities. Rather, the three case studies suggest that efforts have gone primarily to defining and revising or refining rubrics and performance benchmarks.

Modeling good assessment methodology, the GE committee has learned from earlier attempts and seeks to improve its approach. Reflecting on the time-consuming nature of these activities, the committee plans to attempt an approach that might be seen as “less ambitious and more deliberate.” In the words of the document, “we have realized that in the future we probably cannot devote the same amount of faculty energy into each of the outcomes that await assessment.” Rather, the hope would be to rely more on

“embedded assessment” and new ways of engaging faculty. The challenge for the GE committee, moreover, remains the same as that which was identified in the 2006 CPR review. As stated, “First, we must use the data gained from the assessment rubrics to develop ways to advance the GE curriculum. Second, we must continue to develop means of assessing the GE qualities not yet addressed.”

The team commends the sustained and substantial effort made to both identify the appropriate objectives of a mission-driven GE program as well as to assess the extent to which these objectives are being met. We agree that an embedded assessment approach is the preferred route because of its more efficient nature and because it will lead to a more consistent, effective and on-going approach to GE assessment in the days to come.

**Recommendation:**

Continue to move forward on the two identified challenges (using data gained from the assessment rubrics to develop ways of advancing the GE curriculum, while also developing means of assessing the GE qualities not yet addressed) employing embedded assessment wherever possible and closing the assessment loop.

**Theme Two: Program Outcomes**

BYU-Hawaii has made significant strides in the area of program outcomes. The institution—in particular faculty leaders—is to be commended not only for the breadth and depth of their work, but also for the diligence with which they are pursuing documentation of outcomes and the processes and systems that they have built to track and make accessible their assessment work.

In the BYU-Hawaii model, the University Assessment Committee (UAC) plays the central role for coordinating assessment efforts across the campus. The UAC is composed of six faculty members and six administrators. Unlike many institutions where the purview of assessment is restricted to academic programs, at BYU-Hawaii the UAC coordinates assessment across all 26 academic programs as well as 32 administrative units (CFR 2.4).

The EER team was impressed by the institution's new assessment e-portfolio at <https://apps.BYU-Hawaii.edu/apps/pirat/Assessment/>, documents generated by departments relating to assessment and program review are posted, regularly updated by departments, and reviewed by the UAC. The e-portfolio makes these documents easily available to the university community, the public, and to reviewers.

**Assessment.** Each academic program/unit is expected to have developed outcome statements, an outcomes matrix, a multi-year assessment plan (updated annually), annual assessment plans (due each October 31), department reports on assessment, and reflective essays (CFR 2.3, 2.4).

An audit of academic department assessment web pages indicates that all have created appropriate Outcome Statements; almost all have created appropriate program outcomes matrices; all but four have created multi-year assessment plans. The majority of programs appear to have been creating and updating assessment plans since the 2001-02 academic year. Many departments show a gap of one or more years during which no assessment plans were submitted. Departmental reports document at a deeper level assessment activities such as retreats and analysis of data, and as might be expected, those departments with well-established assessment programs are starting to document activities

in this way. Again, departments with well-established assessment programs are starting to post reflective essays.

Each program/unit receives feedback on their efforts from the UAC, for example, through a rubric that focuses on the alignment of the assessment activities with the outcomes and the quality of the assessment activities. Evidence of such activities was provided through minutes of the UAC which included both the scored rubrics for the assessment plans (generally about four independent scorers) and the assessment plans themselves. The General Education Committee also reports on its assessment activities to the UAC, but their documentation is not part of the Assessment website.

While UAC carries no formal power and serves only in an advisory capacity, it has been given significant budget resources (over \$50,000) and offers up to \$2,000 per program/unit to support assessment activities annually. They also provide ongoing opportunities for training in assessment. Members of the UAC report that they do not see their role as arbiters of the appropriateness of the program outcomes or the actions taken. They see these areas as being part of the conversation between the Dean or VP and the program/unit.

The EER team observed that it appears that only those programs/units with well-developed assessment programs are consistently providing the analysis, interpretation, and actions that should follow acquisition of student performance data. Even then, the papers tend to be by a single author and do not consistently document departmental involvement in the analysis and conclusions.

A related issue is that most programs/units state their means of assessment in terms such as “80% of students will rate xxx highly” or “70% of students will achieve a score of X or better on YYY test.” This suggests that some programs have focused more on adjusting the percentages to improve the “means of assessment” rather than focusing on appropriately interpreting and acting on the data that they have.

Programs/units that have created Multi-year Assessment Plans generally appear to have come to understand that it is not necessary to assess every outcome every year. In most such programs/units both the multi-year and annual plans demonstrate clear linkage to stated outcomes. Of 25 programs/units, 21 have created Multi-year Assessment Plans.

**Recommendations:**

1. Clarify where documentation of analysis and interpretations of assessment results fits in the assessment process and set clear expectations for such documentation. Work to focus the process on the questions of what the data mean, whether the results are good enough, and (if not) what can be done to improve the results.
2. Expect all programs/units to create multi-year assessment plans and to update them annually.

**Program Review.** BYU-Hawaii engages in a five-year cycle of program review for academic programs and it appears to be faithfully following its cycle (CFR 2.7). The EER team read many of the available program reviews and related documents, available on the assessment e-portfolio. Support units as well as academic units participate fully in the

program review process (CFR 2.11); however, given the focus of the EER, the EER team examined only academic program reviews.

Program reviews showed a wide range in quality, ranging from the hastily assembled to the thoroughly documented and thoughtfully composed—perhaps reflecting the variation in degree of engagement of the various departments. There appeared to be a strong correlation between the quality of the program review and the level of engagement in assessment activities. This suggests that drivers of quality program reviews may include the internal motivation of the department for improvement and the understanding of the linkage between self-review processes and improvement.

UAC has been working to integrate assessment of student learning outcomes into the program review process. Recent program reviews (e.g. Mathematics) discuss work on assessment, but there does not appear to be a uniform expectation of what should be included regarding assessment within the review. Members of the UAC affirmed that this was the current state of affairs and indicated that such integration was part of the work of the coming year.

The EER team also noted that, of the ten departments who have completed or nearly completed the review process, six have received a Dean's response to program review; of the four without, one reports that the imminent replacement of the VPA has delayed a response. At a meeting with the EER team, the current VPA indicated that such responses were part of the process. The success and sustainability of program reviews requires responses from the administration that are both substantive and consistent. At many institutions, the VPA meets with each department following the self study and

external review to work out a memorandum of agreement specifying what changes the department will make and what support the institution will provide for these changes.

### **Recommendations**

1. Formally integrate assessment results into the program review process.
2. Because program review benefits both the program and the institution, conclude the program review process with a memorandum of agreement between the program and the appropriate vice president and/or dean as to actions to be taken by each in response to the self study and the external review.

### **Theme Three: Meaningful Employment**

Consistent with its mission, at BYU-Hawaii “meaningful employment” means preparing international students to return to their home country with skills and knowledge that will enable them to make their living there and to contribute substantively to the welfare of that country. The concept of returnability, first formulated in 2001 by a faculty and administrative team, has provided focus to many university functions and units over the past seven years. Woven into these efforts has been a concerted effort to document success in this endeavor with data from student services and academic programs (CFR 2.10, 2.11).

The EE report cites impressive evidence of improved returnability rates: for example, between 2003 and 2006, the international return-to-country rate went from 18% to 56.5%.

The EER team is impressed by the initiative and found that faculty, staff, and students were universally supportive of the purposes of this program (CFR 2.3, 2.4, 2.5,

2.12). It is clear that this focus provides the university the opportunity to enhance learning for students outside the classroom and to help them develop the professional and personal skills needed to be successful when seeking employment. Unique to BYU-Hawaii are institutional cooperation with ecclesiastical leaders in home countries to recruit promising candidates, and institutional efforts—including faculty as well as staff—to find appropriate internships and post-graduation jobs for students in their home countries.

The new Career Advancement Plan, required of all students since Fall 2006, embodies the highly collaborative, complex, and vibrant processes at work in sustaining and increasing returnability. By the time students reach graduation, they will have completed 11 different self-assessments, meetings, interviews, and surveys involving many different campus units, and completed an electronic career portfolio (CFR 2.12).

The EER team commends the university for its commitment, creativity, and sensitivity in realizing its goals of providing meaningful employment to its international students and of ensuring that they return to productive lives in their home countries.

#### **Theme Four: Effective Communication in English**

Beginning in 2001, at the direction of the Board of Trustees, BYU-Hawaii increased the enrollment of students from Asia and the South and East Pacific. The result is that almost half the students communicate in English as a second language (designated in the BYU-Hawaii CPR and EER reports as L2 students).

In 2004, an L2 Committee was formed with a mission to “ensure that the entire campus works together to make BYU-Hawaii a place where non-native speakers of English develop clear competence in the English language.” Drawing on campus-wide surveys,

standardized test results, and student performance in campus courses, the L2 committee has formulated a comprehensive plan to achieve this mission (CFR 2.10). The EER commends the candor and clarity of vision demonstrated by the L2 committee in its section of the EE report. These bode well for the eventual success of their plan. What remains is for administration and faculty to commit to this plan.

The EER team concludes that, despite the efforts of the L2 Committee and the BYU-Hawaii community, it is not clear that L2 students as a cohort are developing “clear competence in the English language.” A key indicator is that the performance of graduating students on the TOEFL exam averages 559. As the BYU-Hawaii Educational Effectiveness Report notes, “Universities commonly require a score of 550 (only slightly below the average score that BYU-Hawaii students have achieved upon graduation) for undergraduate admission.” In short, students at the end of their time at BYU-Hawaii seem to be using English at levels required by other universities at the time of admission (CFR 2.1). Of concern is that faculty have apparently accommodated students’ abilities in English and worked around their limitations to achieve academic success. It is not clear whether or to what extent English language competence plays in the six-year graduation rate, which over the last four years has averaged 39% (based on the 2006-07 IPEDS submission).

The new president directed that, effective fall 2007, the minimum TOEFL score for entering students be raised to 500. Efforts are also under way to introduce on-line courses to be offered to high school students in LDS wards in Asia and the Pacific in order to remedy deficiencies in English before they matriculate at BYU-Hawaii. The university’s

Center for the Improvement of Teaching & Outreach (CITO) is working with the department of English as an International Language to develop online EIL courses, and its Reading and Writing Center has an online tutoring system that can support this distance learning effort. CITO is discussed further under Standard Two, “Support for Student Learning.”

The efficacy of an online approach to English language instruction, however, is still to be determined. Language and student services professionals, for example, expressed some doubt as to how well English language mastery can progress when students are immersed in their native language environments and are exposed to English only through distance delivery media. Clearly, this experiment will need careful monitoring.

In addition, development of such outreach courses should not replace the L2 committee’s plan for more vigorous and renewed efforts to raise standards for and the performance of L2 students on campus, as outlined in the EE report.

**Recommendations:**

1. Involve all parties in careful planning and preparation for distance delivery of EIL courses, at remote sites as well as on campus, and continuously assess the effectiveness of these modalities.
2. Continue to provide the L2 Committee with adequate support for their on-campus efforts to engage faculty in raising English language expectations and to provide on-campus students with additional English learning opportunities.

### **III. B. Other Issues Arising from the Standards**

#### **Standard One: Defining Purposes/Ensuring Educational Objectives**

There is no question that BYU-Hawaii continues to pursue its mission of preparing students educationally to live as examples of the faith as embodied in the tenets of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It is equally apparent that the church is intentional and generous in supporting the university and its operations, and that there is universal acceptance and understanding of this mission (CFR 1.1).

In the last two years, however, the expression of the mission in educational practice has come under review, and the particulars of that practice into the future are still being formed. The new president has been in office less than a year and has been responding briskly to the two imperatives from the Board of Trustees, to continue to improve the quality of the broad educational experience, and to lower the cost of education per FTE student to the Church.

In institutional planning discussions to date, improving the quality of the broad educational experience includes a renewed emphasis on integrating spiritual and secular learning with an aim of developing moral character and leadership; on fostering appreciation for diversity and inter-cultural competency, in particular English proficiency for L2 students; and on facilitating work/study experiences, internships, and placements so that graduates are employable and productive, particularly as they return to their home countries. In broad outline, these initiatives are consistent with the educational mission of a church-related university. They also continue directions and emphases of the university that WASC teams have found on earlier visits.

New, however, is the directive to lower the cost of education to the Church. In FY 2007, the LDS church benefaction amounted to 81.8% of the operating costs. Net tuition and fees accounted for but \$6.6 million of revenue on expenses of \$82.9 million. The president is determined to reduce the benefaction to 70% of operating costs. This has led to the creation of an Organizational Design Team tasked with studying ways to restructure the staffing of the university. It has led to the creation of an additional summer term, to pressure to increase the student-faculty ratio and the number of students educated, and to the mounting of online distance-learning courses. Areas for possible consideration include increasing the proportion of students from families who are better able to pay the costs of attendance, and thus seeking the appropriate balance between Asian/ Pacific Islanders and students from English-speaking backgrounds.

It is too early to determine the efficacy of these measures financially and programmatically. A concern for the university community and the EER team is how these strategies for implementing the cost-cutting imperative will affect the quality of teaching and learning at the University.

**Recommendation:**

While the team recognizes the value and importance of delivering a cost-effective educational program, we are also aware that the contemplated shifts in funding are laced with any number of potential pitfalls. We encourage the university, therefore, to explore other methods of decreasing Church funding (e.g., building the endowment; increased annual fund giving) while keeping in mind the importance of maintaining and enhancing the quality of the educational experience.

## **Standard Two: Achieving Educational Objectives through Core Functions**

BYU-Hawaii continues to generate and make widely available student data of many kinds (CFR 2.10). All graduating seniors complete a Graduating Student Survey and do exit interviews with their department chairs. Results are distributed each year, posted on the assessment webpage, and used by many committees and in program reviews for academic and student support units. Since 2002, a majority of BYU-Hawaii's freshmen and seniors have participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement. Results are made available widely and regularly, and are now posted on the assessment web site. BYU-Hawaii has consistently outscored peer institutions in two NSSE areas: active and collaborative learning and supportive campus environment.

**Teaching and Learning.** The university community at large shares the institutional commitment "to prepare students for a life of learning and service in an expanding international church" (CFR 1.1) The EER team heard direct and indirect testimony to this commitment in all of our meetings—from faculty, staff, and administration—and found evidence of the commitment in many documents from many sources including statements of program learning objectives, course syllabi, a conference paper describing a key General Education course History 202, and minutes of the Assessment Committee.

The EER team's review of 59 syllabi from 21 disciplines or departments suggests that academic expectations are appropriately rigorous and that diverse perspectives are accommodated (CFR 2.1). However, given the relatively high level of departmental involvement in program assessment, it is remarkable that few of these syllabi stated course

or program learning outcomes in assessable terms (CFR 2.2, 2.3). Of the 59 syllabi reviewed, 26 did not list course outcomes, 25 stated outcomes in such broad terms as “understand” and “develop an understanding,” and five listed program outcomes without translating these into course outcomes. Just two syllabi used standard assessment terminology.

It was reported that syllabi for courses used in the general education program specify which of the seven outcomes of a generally educated person are targeted by the courses; however, review of the GE syllabi among those described above indicates that this is not yet standard practice (CFR 2.2, 2.3).

**Recommendations:**

1. Continue to track and respond to shifts in levels of student engagement through the NSSE.
2. Train faculty how to formulate program and course learning objectives in assessable form and encourage them to include these in their course syllabi.

The EER team commends the institution’s outstanding support for faculty development in assessment and teaching, including travel to national training conferences, accreditation conferences, and—for ICS faculty—to other countries. Support for ongoing development activities for administrative professionals has been evident, as well.

However, the EER team is concerned about the consideration of increasing class sizes and the effect of the expanded academic year on teaching load. While these organizational moves are contemplated, the review team asks the university to consider the impact this will have on its reputation as a small, residential, comprehensive university

where students can expect to receive personal attention in the classroom. It is important to give serious consideration about how faculty will be able to remain current in their fields if teaching demands are such that they do not have sufficient time to engage in scholarship and research. Scholarship and research form the core of a professor's identity as it informs teaching, maintains currency in the field, and helps in the creation of new knowledge which enhances professional and personal self-worth and improves the reputation of the university. We are not familiar with any other small college or university with similar average class sizes that is trying to increase class sizes, particularly in a university which has such a broad range of English speakers in some classes. It has been the site team's observation that schools are trying to do just the opposite; reduce class sizes, rationalize teaching loads, and get faculty and students more engaged in research that enhances the educational process.

**Recommendations:**

1. Continue to support the professional development and professional identity of faculty and support staff in forms such as workshops, education, and travel to national conferences.
2. Engage faculty, staff, and administration in candid and extended discussion about the likely consequences of increasing class size, and provide support for faculty to explore ways in which teaching strategies can be modified to accommodate larger classes while enhancing student learning.

**Scholarship and Creative Activity.** There is evidence that the university values scholarship and supports curricular and instructional innovation (CFR 2.8). The

university's annual evaluation requires faculty to set goals in scholarship as well as in teaching, creative activity, and service. These expectations are also described in the university's "Continuing Faculty Status and Promotion" packet, which specifies that promotion to full professor requires "an established and ongoing program of research and publication in rank and evidence of national or international professional recognition."

The institution supports the integration of faculty research into senior capstone courses. There are funds to support faculty-student research; some of these projects have resulted in presentations at national conferences and in publications. A list of completed faculty-student research projects is posted on the assessment web site. The EER team learned that deans and department chairs have been able to give course releases to faculty with established research and publication records.

The expanded academic calendar offers students the opportunity to enroll in courses year-round and extends potential research time between the end of the spring semester and the beginning of the fall semester. But given the relatively low salaries and high cost of living, it is quite likely that many faculty will continue to opt to teach during the summer terms for additional pay rather than use the summer interim for research.

As was the CPR team, the EER team is concerned about the balance of teaching and research (CFR 2.9). The prevalence of the four-course teaching load per semester, the extended academic year, and the projected increase in the faculty-student ratio appear to threaten the ability of faculty to pursue research actively.

**Recommendation:**

Assuming a commitment to both quality teaching and good scholarship, the university should seriously consider a formal restructuring of teaching loads so that they are in closer alignment with those institutions that require scholarly activity while emphasizing the importance of undergraduate teaching.

**Support for Student Learning.** The Center for Instructional Technology and Outreach, recently renamed the Center for Improvement of Teaching and Outreach (CITO), is organized into three areas: Continuing Education, the Center for the Improvement of Teaching, and Outreach and Distributed Learning. CITO has been given the mandate and funding to reach more students via distance technology, in particular General Education and English courses for English language learners in Asia and the Pacific.

Given the considerable changes that these new mandates will have on the campus and especially on the faculty, CITO is currently at the focal point for much faculty anxiety. Faculty anxieties revolve around control of the curriculum, the pace and timeline for implementation, and whether appropriate and sufficient resources will be available to support faculty through the transition and to support students who enroll in online courses. Faculty expressed concern as well as to how BYU-Hawaii would maintain the distinctiveness of its programs and approach through distance education, especially as it brings general education courses online.

**Recommendation:**

Establish a regular program of meetings between CITO leadership and academic departments and committees, library, and academic support offices to negotiate and clarify issues relating to distance delivery of EIL and general education courses.

### **Standard Three: Developing and Applying Resources and Organizational Structures to Ensure Sustainability**

As did the CPR team, the EER team found BYU-Hawaii to be well supported in terms of faculty and staff; its fiscal, physical, and information resources; and its organizational structures.

A recurring concern of the Commission has been the level of faculty participation in curriculum, governance, and strategic planning, noted in the action letter of 1989 and the interim report committee's 2000 review (CFR 3.11). As the CPR team reported, progress in this area continues. Although there is no faculty senate in the conventional sense, opportunities abound for faculty participation in university affairs: the university's website lists 49 committees, many with current faculty membership. (Committee charges and minutes of committee meetings have not yet been posted.) The Organizational Design team includes two faculty. The Academic Planning Council, while chaired by the VPA, is comprised of deans and department chairs. The Faculty Advisory Council—chaired by a faculty member—is comprised of faculty members who do not have administrative positions.

### **Standard Four: Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement**

Commitment to learning and improvement is evidenced throughout the organization. There are strong, well-supported assessment processes in place that cover both academic programs and administrative units; these are described in the “Program Review” section.

The EER team considers that strategic planning will continue to be an issue for the institution as it works out new processes and structures. The 2006 BYU-Hawaii CPR report and the report of the 2006 WASC Visiting Team both document that, in response to the 1996 WASC accreditation review, the university initiated a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) in 1997 and engaged in various planning activities over the following years. In 2002, the SPC articulated the *BYU Hawaii Strategic Plan (2002-2007)*. The 2006 CPR team commended the University for “erecting processes whereby strategic planning has linked fiscal and physical master planning with progress in curricular reform and assessment.” However, the team also noted that by the time of its visit the strategic plan had “receded from public notice” and recommended that BYU-H “should make periodic reports to the campus community on the objectives of the strategic plan to affirm the progress that has been made” (CFR 4.1).

The strategic planning process that was shared with WASC two years ago has been replaced by a new strategic planning process initiated by the president. The former Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee has been replaced with a President’s Advisory Council, which, according to the EE report, “consists of the President’s Council plus nine additional members, most of whom were on the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee.” In addition to realigning committees, the president employed a

consultant to assist in organizational redesign in light of Board of Trustees directives that BYU-Hawaii continue to improve the quality of the broad educational experience and lower the cost of education per FTE student to the Church.

A report on the status of the new strategic planning process was made available to the team when it arrived for the Educational Effectiveness Review. Aspects of institutional planning have been shared with the BYU-Hawaii community since January, but this effort is still in its early stages. Given the short time that the new process has been in place, the recent leadership transitions, and the structural changes, the university has not had time to definitively set its new direction. Nor is it possible for the team to judge the effectiveness of the new process.

The President is attempting to move swiftly to implement new processes and directions and the team found significant anxiety amongst faculty, staff, and students about the changes and processes. Staff in particular are afraid about being laid off, and faculty, staff, and students expressed concern about the new strategic planning process imposing BYU-Idaho or BYU-Provo educational models on BYU-Hawaii. Faculty, staff, and students also expressed concern about how the mission of the university will be affected by the results of the strategic planning process and the desire to provide more pre-professional training for students.

**Recommendations:**

1. Actively engage all members of the university community in dialog as to the direction and nature of these changes.

2. Make periodic reports to the university community on the restructuring of the university and the strategic plan.

### **III. Major Findings and Recommendations**

#### **III.A. Major Findings**

The EER team finds that BYU-Hawaii has fulfilled the outcomes for the review that it set for itself in the institutional proposal, and that the structures and processes have been in place for continued progress along the paths envisioned in that proposal. The CPR and EER teams have both concluded that BYU-Hawaii has succeeded in combining its Church-based and educational missions while fostering cultural diversity in its curriculum and its outreach. The team finds that BYU-Hawaii has been a student-centered institution, with faculty and staff working tirelessly to provide students with good learning opportunities, in the classroom and beyond, and before and after graduation. The institution has made notable progress during the review period in its returnability program. It has been steadily developing a “culture of evidence,” with faculty committees taking the lead in GE and program outcomes assessment and in the project of improving English language learning, carrying the burden with commendable dedication and persistence. It appears that buy-in to student learning assessment continues to spread across the campus. Continued progress will require continued institutional support for these efforts in the form of funding for faculty development.

The EER team notes that the institution’s online portfolio has grown richer since the CPR visit, making available to the campus and to the public many important documents and reports. Especially noteworthy are pages providing links to the numerous campus committees, to many of the institutional documents stipulated by WASC, and the very well

developed and well-maintained institutional research and assessment web pages. The team speculates that the institution's move towards online transparency and access will contribute to the broader involvement of the university community in the larger processes of defining mission and strategic planning.

The EER team observes that with a pro-active new president, a new imperative from the Board of Trustees to reduce costs, and its entire organizational structure under review, the institution appears to be on the threshold of major changes.

The team cannot assess the direction, nature, and impact of these changes on the structures and processes that we and the CPR team have reviewed. We are convinced that, during this transition, the institution would benefit from periodic self-evaluation, from continuous open discourse about changes, and from guidance from the Commission.

### **III.B. Major Recommendations**

1. Continue efforts to hire and retain the very best faculty by moving ahead with faculty housing efforts, making workload adjustments to increase and reward research and scholarship, and improve opportunities for advancement for women and underrepresented minority groups. Seriously consider a formal restructuring of teaching loads so that they are in closer alignment with those institutions that require scholarly activity while emphasizing the importance of undergraduate teaching.
2. Make periodic and regular reports to the campus community on the emerging goals, objectives, and strategies of the new strategic plan; affirm the progress that has been made in achieving stated objectives; and actively engage all members of the university community in dialog as to the direction and nature of these changes.

3. Explore alternative methods of decreasing reliance on Church funding – changes in the tuition structure, building the endowment, increased annual fund giving – while keeping in mind the importance of maintaining and enhancing the quality of the educational experience.
4. Continue to train faculty on how to integrate assessment practices and learning objectives in classroom instruction (including course syllabi), in the conduct of program review self-studies, and in focusing on the questions of what the data means and what can be done to ensure continuous improvement of student learning.
5. Continue to support the professional development and professional identity of both faculty and support staff in the form of workshops, education, and travel to national conferences; while engaging faculty, staff, and administration in candid and extended discussion about the likely consequences of increasing class size, and providing support for faculty to explore ways in which teaching strategies can be modified to accommodate larger classes while enhancing student learning.
6. Continue to build the culture of evidence that is being documented on the institution's assessment web pages, using the data gathered from the NSSE, graduating student survey, the results of the TOEFL and standardized tests, the student information system, and numerous other documents and reports in planning and managing all of the institutions functions.