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Reaffirmation Committee Visit  
March 16 – 18, 2005

**SECOND MONITORING REPORT**  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
(SACS)  
Commission on Colleges

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## Executive Summary

In 2005, the Commission on Colleges reaffirmed the accreditation of the University of West Florida (UWF) through 2015. In conjunction with reaffirmation, the Visiting Committee requested that UWF address six recommendations. UWF successfully addressed two of the six recommendations in its Response Report to the Visiting Committee submitted September 2005. Recommendations 1 and 2, both regarding CR 2.12 (Quality Enhancement Plan).<sup>1</sup> UWF then successfully addressed two of the remaining four recommendations of the original six in its First Monitoring Report submitted October 2006: Recommendation 3, regarding CR 2.12 (Quality Enhancement Plan), and Recommendation 4, regarding CS 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness).<sup>2</sup> In this Second Monitoring Report, UWF presents its responses to the Commission's two remaining concerns: Recommendation 5 (All Educational Programs) and 6 (Undergraduate Programs) quoted below. We believe that UWF demonstrates that it has successfully addressed these final two concerns, as shown in the responses below to the Commission's final two requests.

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<sup>1</sup> CR 2.12, Recommendation 1:

The committee recommends that the university refine the focus of its QEP and formulate relevant and appropriate goals, objectives, and evaluative measures related to student learning.

CR 2.12, Recommendation 2:

The committee recommends that the institution develop a carefully designed and comprehensive implementation plan that includes a time line for major accomplishments, a clearly defined management structure, and provision of the necessary financial, human, and information resources for the achievement of goals and objectives.

<sup>2</sup> CR 2.12, Recommendation 3:

The committee recommends that the university refine its assessment of the QEP in order to better monitor progress toward goals and objectives to include direct and indirect measures to assess improvement in the quality of student learning.

CS 3.3.1, Recommendation 4:

The committee recommends that the university demonstrate that it assesses outcomes for its educational programs and for its administrative and educational support services and provide evidence that it uses the results for improvement.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

### **CS 3.4.1 (All Educational Programs) from Principles of Accreditation, 2002-2006 Edition**

The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded (a) is approved by the faculty and administration, and (b) establishes and evaluates program and learning outcomes.

### **Recommendation 5 from March 2005 Visiting Committee Report**

*The committee recommends that for each educational program for which academic credit is awarded the university evaluate program and learning outcomes.*

### **Request from January 2006 Notification Letter from the President of the Commission**

*Demonstrate that a broad cross-section of educational programs have appropriate means to evaluate student learning outcomes. The institution might want to examine the Business and History department proposals for examples of promising evaluation techniques. Many academic programs rely heavily on grades within individual courses and on student surveys as the primary means of assessing student learning outcomes. There is little evidence of more direct measurement of student learning.*

### **Request from January 2006 Response Letter from the President of the Commission**

*The institution has not yet demonstrated compliance because, according to its Monitoring Report, 91 percent of the undergraduate programs submitted assessment plans and reports and, of those, only 59 percent are considered complete by the university (p. 67). Similarly, the report says that 78 percent of graduate programs have submitted their assessment plans and, of those, only 71 percent are considered complete (p. 71).*

*A further report is requested and should include the following: documentation that all departments/units participate in the planning/assessment system, and demonstration through a full cycle that the institution evaluates program and learning outcomes.*

We believe that UWF demonstrates that all academic departments now participate in a system of planning, assessment, and curriculum review and revision for their academic programs (both undergraduate and graduate). Departments have submitted annual reports for 2006-2007 in which they documented that they had completed a full cycle of evaluation of program and student learning outcomes. This documentation included identification of student learning outcomes that the department assessed in 2006-2007, a description of their assessment methods, a brief summary of their assessment results, a description of decisions made based on these data, and an evaluation of the assessment plan used. Evidence of the sustainability of an all-campus

commitment to assessing student learning is further demonstrated by the fact that both undergraduate and graduate departments have also identified the domains of student learning outcomes that they plan to assess in 2007-2008 and described the primary question about student learning in their curriculum that would be addressed by this assessment work.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

### **CS 3.5.1 (Undergraduate Programs) from Principles of Accreditation, 2002-2006 Edition**

The institution identifies college-level competencies within the general education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained these competencies.

### **Recommendation 6 from March 2005 Visiting Committee Report**

*The committee recommends that the university provide evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies identified in the general education core.*

### **Request from January 2006 Notification Letter from the President of the Commission**

*Document the results of evaluation of general educational competencies. Include in the report examples of specific outcomes/evaluation that extend beyond course grades and student/instructor evaluations.*

*While the general education program has clearly defined competencies, the assessment of these competencies lacks sufficient documentation of results of assessment activities. There is an emphasis on intra-course assessment and a heavy reliance on course grades as assessment tools. The use of common rubrics, however, shows promise.*

### **Request from January 2007 Response Letter from the President of the Commission**

*The institution has not demonstrated that a fully formed general education assessment system is in place with participation across all units. The institution's own report, (p. 81) states, "Plans are underway to assist remaining departments with the identification of two appropriate student learning outcomes for their courses and the development of appropriate direct measures based on embedded assessments."*

*A further report is requested that shows that all departments have identified college-level competencies and that provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.*

We believe that UWF demonstrates that all departments that contribute to the General Education core (referred to in this Second Monitoring Report as Academic Foundations/General Studies), have identified college-level competencies (student

learning outcomes in the Academic Foundations Domains) and have developed a successful method for gathering evidence that graduates have attained those competencies. All departments that contribute one or more courses to the Academic Foundations/General Studies curriculum participated in a full cycle of planning, assessment, and review as well as revision of courses and instructional strategies. Specifically, departments have submitted annual reports for 2006-2007 in which they documented that they had

- identified student learning outcomes in courses that contribute to program student learning outcomes identified for Academic Foundations
- provided a description of the methods used to assess these outcomes in 2006-2007
- provided a brief summary of their assessment results
- described decisions made based on these data
- evaluated their assessment plan
- identified the domains of student learning outcomes that they plan to assess in 2007-2008
- described the question about student learning that would be addressed by this assessment work.

In addition to within-department evaluation of student learning related to Academic Foundations/General Studies, additional data were gathered to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment model adopted for the Academic Foundations curriculum. As described in this section, this model appears to be an effective method for evaluating student learning for a set of learning outcomes when multiple departments share responsibility for the quality of student learning related to these outcomes. We believe that the model adopted for assessment of student learning in Academic Foundations provides adequate evidence (based on embedded assessments) that

students have attained these competencies. These assessments include evaluation of samples of student work (course assignments, papers, presentations, and projects) with rubrics that focus on targeted student learning outcomes and special quizzes or sets of questions embedded in course examinations.

We believe that UWF has established structures and processes to support ongoing assessment of academic programs and student learning and to develop faculty expertise with effective assessment practices and instructional strategies. Structural and procedural changes that have been implemented include:

- revision of the Curriculum Change Review system, an online process for managing all program and course modifications at UWF
- development and implementation of policies and procedures related to Academic Learning Compacts (identifying program-level student learning outcomes and related assessment methods)
- creation of department-level curriculum and assessment review committees
- revision of annual report templates (requiring routine reporting of assessment activity for all academic programs)
- examination of tenure and promotion guidelines.

To continue to sustain an institutional commitment to assessing student learning and using results to improve learning, UWF has committed to offering faculty development activities, including workshops and consultations at the college, department, and individual level. Moreover, we have scheduled several initiatives in the 2007-2008 academic year that provide expanded programs for faculty development and refine existing structures and processes. Several other steps the University has put in place to sustain the institution's commitment to assessment include:

- an annual mini-conference during which faculty and staff will model their good assessment practices
- establishment of a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Interest Group that will examine and promote the role of good assessment practices in the development of a line of scholarly research on teaching and learning
- use of assessment for curriculum reform in the mid-term formative evaluation of the Quality Enhancement Plan
- examination of the rubrics used to assess student learning evidenced in master's theses
- adoption of an evidence-based approach taken to structure the review and reform of the university multicultural requirement.

As documented in this Second Monitoring Report, we believe that UWF has established structures and processes to effectively support ongoing assessment of academic programs and student learning. In addition, we have provided evidence of an ongoing commitment to develop faculty expertise with assessment practices and instructional strategies to increase active learning and student engagement. We have also clearly documented that **all academic departments** participate in these assessment processes and use the evidence generated to examine their academic programs and initiate program improvements for General Education, undergraduate programs, and graduate programs.