Statement Regarding the Report

This report represents the professional judgment of the peer review committees that conducted a comprehensive review of the institution's compliance with the accreditation requirements of the Commission on Colleges contained in the Principles of Accreditation.

The Commission on Colleges will make the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the institution's compliance with the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the report and on the accreditation status of the institution rest with the Commission on Colleges.

Name of the Institution: University of West Florida

Date of the Review: March 16-18, 2005

COC Staff Liaison: Dr. W. Donald Crump

Chair of the Committee (name, title, institution, city and state):

Dr. Duane J. Rosa
Director of Planning and Analysis
Professor of Economics
West Texas A&M University
Canyon, TX 79016
Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

Briefly describe the nature of the institution and its history, e.g., control, enrollment, and student characteristics. Describe the purpose of the committee visit and acknowledge the arrangements and hospitality extended by the institution. (Personal references may be included here).

The University of West Florida in Pensacola, Florida is a member of the State University System of Florida. The university was established in 1963 and began classes in Fall, 1967. The campus is situated on a 1,600 acre nature preserve and is located 10 miles north of downtown Pensacola. In addition to the Pensacola campus, the university has campus locations at Fort Walton Beach, Eglin Air Force Base Center, and Chipola. The current president, Dr. John C. Cavanaugh, has been with the university since 2002.

The Fall 2004 headcount enrollment was 9,611 students. The headcount distribution is: 5607 Full-time undergraduates; 1997 Part-time undergraduates; 357 Full-time graduates; 898 Part-time graduates; 96 Unclassified students; and 656 Part-time unclassified students.

The University offers degrees in three colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Professional Studies. The median age of students is 24, with 40.2% males and 59.8% females.

The reaffirmation committee representing the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools arrived on March 16, 2005. The purpose of this visit was to conduct a comprehensive review of the institution's compliance with the accreditation requirements contained in the Principles of Accreditation. The committee consisted of six representatives from universities within SACS, two university-designated QEP evaluators, and Dr. Donald Crump, Associate Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges. The committee was welcomed to the university by the President, Dr. Cavanaugh, and by Dr. Carl Backman, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The reaffirmation committee met with the institution's SACS Leadership Team and QEP Steering Committee on Wednesday afternoon, where the team received an overview of the QEP by Dr. Cavanaugh. Following these meetings, the team began its work of interviewing university administrators, faculty, and students. Team members also made a visit to the Fort Walton Beach campus location. As part of its consultative role in evaluating the QEP, the committee held meetings on Thursday with the QEP Steering Committee, the deans, student affairs personnel, and with the President.

The committee met as a group to review materials and agreed upon each recommendation made to the University relating to the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards. The final activity of the visit was an exit conference with the President, Provost, SACS Leadership and QEP committees, and other university designated representatives. During the exit conference, recommendations made by the visiting committee relating to compliance and the QEP were shared with this group. Time was then given for discussion of both compliance and QEP issues.

President John Cavanaugh, Dr. Carl Backman, and all members of the administration and faculty at the University of West Florida are to be commended on the positive manner in which they received the Reaffirmation Committee. The committee would like to especially commend Dr. Backman, for all the work he did preparing for our visit, for providing all materials requested by the committee, and for being a very gracious host. The Visiting committee expresses its appreciation to everyone at the University of West Florida for the hospitality shown during this visit.

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Part II. Assessment of Compliance

Directions for Parts A thru D: Indicate the institution’s compliance or non-compliance. Write a recommendation for any standard or requirement marked “non-compliance.” A recommendation is a formal written statement by a visiting committee of an action that it believes an institution must take in order to comply with a standard. Because a recommendation identifies an institution’s non-compliance with the Principles, and the institution must take corrective action, it is important for the committee to provide specific evidence of non-compliance in the narrative. This evidence clearly explicates the reasons for that recommendation. When a recommendation is warranted, number and state the recommendation, then provide the rationale and evidence. A complete listing of recommendations should be included in Appendix C.

A. Assessment of Compliance with Section 1

Institutional Integrity

X. The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

Adherence to Commission Policy

X. The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

Substantive Change

X. The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:

Representation of Accredited Status

X. The Committee finds no basis for making recommendations.

The Committee makes the following recommendations due to non-compliance:
B. Assessment of Compliance with the Core Requirements

2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. (Degree-granting Authority)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting members of the board have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board in which neither the presiding officer nor a majority of the other members are civilian employees of the military or active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Neither the presiding officer of the board nor the majority of other voting board members have contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. (Governing Board)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.3 The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. (Chief Executive Officer)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.4 The institution has a clearly defined and published mission statement specific to the institution and appropriate to an institution of higher education, addressing teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. (Institutional Mission)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

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2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement, and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. *(Institutional Effectiveness)*

__X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.6 The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. *(Continuous Operation)*

__X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for program equivalency. *(Program Length)*

__X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.2 The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated purpose and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. *(Program Content)*

__X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.7.3 The institution requires in each undergraduate degree program the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that is (1) a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts; social/behavioral sciences; and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. The institution provides a written justification and rationale for course equivalency. *(General Education)*

__X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

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2.7.4 The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia, or uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In all cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (Contractual Agreements for Instruction)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution. The institution has adequate faculty resources to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. In addition, upon application for candidacy, an applicant institution demonstrates that it meets the comprehensive standard for faculty qualifications. (Faculty)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections as well as to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. These collections and resources are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. (Learning Resources and Services)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

Based on a review of databases and an examination of monographs holdings and documentation in the Focus Report, the institution provides evidence that adequate learning resources are available in a multiplicity of formats for students and faculty in the Florida area. Additionally, the institution works collaboratively with area universities in Germany to provide additional resources to students and faculty in the MBA program. Formal agreements are in place, and students can borrow resources and have full access to holdings.

2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. (Student Support Services)

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

2.11 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability, and adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.
The member institution provides the following financial statements: (a) an institutional audit (or Standard Review Report issued in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or Standard Review Report) guide; (b) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and, (c) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board.

Audit requirements for applicant institutions may be found in the Commission policy entitled "Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions." (Resources)

X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

The institution furnished audited financial statements for fiscal year 03-04 and a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, as part of its Focused Report. These statements demonstrate continuing compliance with CR 2.11.

The audit report for fiscal year 03-04 contained a qualified opinion due to the failure of the UWF Foundation, Inc., a component unit of UWF, to "recognize in its financial statements a potential asset impairment loss resulting from water intrusion in the Village East student complex." The committee discussed this issue with the UWF Vice President for Administration and other UWF and foundation officials. There are no issues related to this qualified opinion that result in non-compliance with CR 2.11.

2.12 The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan and demonstrates that the plan is part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process.

X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

(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.

(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.

(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.
C. Assessment of Compliance with the Comprehensive Standards

3.1.1 The institution has a clear and comprehensive mission statement that guides it; is approved by the governing board; is periodically reviewed by the board; and is communicated to the institution's constituencies.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the evaluation of the chief executive officer.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure:

3.2.2.1 the institution’s mission;
3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution;
3.2.2.3 institutional policy, including policies concerning related and affiliated corporate entities and all auxiliary services;
3.2.2.4 related foundations (athletic, research, etc.) and other corporate entities whose primary purpose is to support the institution and/or its programs.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.3 The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies, and protects the institution from such influence.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.5 Members of the governing board can be dismissed only for cause and by due process

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

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3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.7 The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.8 The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.9 The institution defines and publishes policies regarding appointment and employment of faculty and staff.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.10 The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators, including the chief executive officer, on a periodic basis.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.11 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.12 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate control of the institution's fund-raising activities.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

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3.2.13 Any institution-related foundation not controlled by the institution has a contractual or other formal agreement that (a) accurately describes the relationship between the institution and the foundation, and (b) describes any liability associated with that relationship. In all cases, the institution ensures that the relationship is consistent with its mission.

X__ Compliance
____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.2.14 The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. This applies to students, faculty and staff.

X__ Compliance
____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.

X__ Compliance
____ Non-Compliance

Comment

The institution has provided evidence that expected outcomes for its educational programs, and its administrative and educational support services, have been identified. The university has established Academic Learning Compacts for each of its undergraduate educational programs. Administrative and educational support service units have established mission statements and related goals and objectives. In some cases assessment measures are in place for educational support services and results have been used for improvements.

However, in most cases for both its educational programs and administrative and educational support service units, assessment measures associated with each of the outcomes have not been identified. No evidence has been provided that improvements have been initiated as a result of an analysis of assessment results.

(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.

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

X__ Compliance
____ Non-Compliance

Comment

The institution has provided evidence that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and administration and has established
program and learning outcomes. These learning outcomes have been described as Academic Learning Compacts that address six domains of learning:

1. Content Domain - includes the concepts, theories, and frameworks of the respective discipline areas.
2. Communication Domain - includes the various modes of communication essential for effective writing, speaking, and otherwise presenting or demonstrating information and ideas.
3. Critical Thinking Domain - includes effective information literacy and management, problem solving, analysis of situations and issues, creativity, and discernment.
4. Project Management Domain - includes the development of self-regulatory behavior, collaboration, reflection and self-assessment, and project planning and execution skills consistent with a particular discipline.
5. Values and Ethics Domain - includes academic integrity, discipline specific professional standards, and values-based decision making.
6. Discipline Specific Outcomes Domain - includes any special outcomes that distinguish a particular field of study such as professional certification or licensure.

The committee found that assessment measures are not yet in place to evaluate the achievement of these outcomes.

(Recommendation 5) The committee recommends that for each educational program for which academic credit is awarded the university evaluate program and learning outcomes.

3.4.2 The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.4 The institution has a defined and published policy for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment
3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs/courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the comprehensive requirements, and evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the purpose of the institution.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.8 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.10 The institution defines and publishes general education requirements for its undergraduate programs and major program requirements for all its programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.11 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student academic records and maintains special security measures to protect and back up data.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.12 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance
3.4.13 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.4.14 The institution's use of technology enhances student learning, is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs, and ensures that students have access to and training in the use of technology.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

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

Compliance
X__ Non-Compliance

Comment

The existing general studies curriculum has been in place for approximately ten years, and college-level competencies in communication, mathematics, social perspectives, humanities, and natural sciences (known at UWF as knowledge clusters) have been in place for approximately two years. These knowledge clusters include one to three outcomes related to content for each of the above five areas. In the last few months, the University has undertaken an examination of learning outcomes for general studies in light of the state-mandated academic learning contract. However, the primary evidence that graduates have attained these competencies is only through the course grade. Course completion alone is inadequate as a measure of the degree to which students have attained competency.

(Recommendation 6) The committee recommends that the university provide evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies identified in the general education core.

3.5.2 The institution awards degrees only to those students who have earned at least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree through instruction offered by that institution.

X__ Compliance
___ Non-Compliance

Comment
3.6.1 The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs.

X Compliance
    Non-Compliance

Comment

3.6.2 The institution ensures that its graduate instruction and resources foster independent learning, enabling the graduate to contribute to a profession or field of study.

X Compliance
    Non-Compliance

Comment

3.6.3 The majority of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through the institution awarding the degree. In the case of graduate and post-baccalaureate professional degree programs offered through joint, cooperative, or consortia arrangements, the student earns a majority of credits from the participating institutions.

X Compliance
    Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines listed below. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty.

X Compliance
    Non-Compliance

Comment

The Committee found evidence that the institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. The institution in determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty does give primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline in accordance with the guidelines established by SACS. The various colleges have taken steps to refine their records on faculty to reflect that these guidelines are met.

In reviewing the files of 60 individuals listed as not meeting the academic credentials, the committee found evidence that the institution has documented the qualifications of these faculty by considering the professional qualifications that demonstrate competence, effectiveness, and capacity. The documentation included evidence of undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, and excellence in teaching.
3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord
with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.3 The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as
teachers, scholars, and practitioners.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.4 The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic
freedom.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic
and governance matters.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.8.1 The institution provides facilities, services, and learning/information resources that are
appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.8.2 The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use
of the library and other learning/information resources.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.8.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education
or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the
mission of the institution.

X__ Compliance
 ____ Non-Compliance

Comment

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3.9.1 The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community.

X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records.

X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

3.9.3 The institution provides services supporting its mission with qualified personnel to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its student affairs programs.

X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

The institution in the Focused Report provided documentation in the form of a Roster showing the qualifications of all student affairs personnel. The committee met with the Vice President of Student Affairs, reviewed the roster of student affairs personnel, and reviewed personnel files in the Human Resources department. The committee found that the institution provided adequate documentation of the qualifications of its student affairs personnel.

3.10.1 The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability.

X__ Compliance  
___ Non-Compliance

Comment

The institution furnished audited financial statements for fiscal year 03-04 as part of its Focused Report. These statements demonstrate continuing compliance with CR 3.10.1

The audit report for fiscal year 03-04 contained a qualified opinion due to the failure of the UWF Foundation, Inc., a component unit of UWF, to "recognize in its financial statements a potential asset impairment loss resulting from water intrusion in the Village East student complex." The committee discussed this issue with the UWF Vice President for Administration and other UWF and foundation officials. There are no issues related to this qualified opinion that result in non-compliance with CR 2.11.

During the review, it was noted that UWF buildings and contents are not fully insured. Property insurance carried through a State pool covered approximately 20% of the estimated $10 million in damage to UWF facilities sustained in last fall's hurricane. It is anticipated that FEMA will provide an additional $4 - $5 million. UWF is seeking a legislative appropriation to provide the balance of funding required to repair the damage to the campus.

This situation also exists at other four-year State institutions in Florida. The Vice President for Administration is working with officials from other State universities to identify and implement a plan to provide an appropriate level of insurance for institutional facilities and contents. The committee supports and encourages this effort.

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3.10.2 The institution provides financial statements and related documents, including multiple measures for determining financial health as requested by the Commission, which accurately and appropriately represent the total operation of the institution.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.3 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.4 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial and physical resources.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.5 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.6 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment

3.10.7 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that are adequate to serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment

D. Assessment of Compliance with Federal Requirements

4.1 When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.

   X. Compliance
   Non-Compliance

Comment
4.2 The institution maintains a curriculum that is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates or degrees awarded.

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment

4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies.

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment

4.4 The institution demonstrates that program length is appropriate for each of the degrees.

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment

4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment

4.6 Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies.

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment

4.7 The institution publishes the name of its primary accreditor and its address and phone number. (The publication of this information is presented so that it is clear that inquiries to the Commission should relate only to the accreditation status of the institution, and not to general admission information.)

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment

4.8 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments.

X__ Compliance
    ___ Non-Compliance

Comment
E. Additional Observations (optional). Although there are no formal suggestions or commendations included as part of this report, the Committee may make observations regarding the institution and include them in this section or under “comments” labeled for the respective Requirement or Standard.
Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

The On-Site Review Committee is responsible for evaluating the acceptability of the QEP in fulfilling Core Requirement 2.12. The primary emphasis of the On-Site Review Committee’s evaluation of the QEP will be based on the extent to which the institution has provided evidence that it is committed to a course of action that addresses a topic or issue to improve the quality of student learning. The On-Site Review Committee also provides advice and consultation to assist the institution in strengthening its QEP.

A. Brief description of the institution’s Quality Enhancement Plan

The University of West Florida’s Quality Enhancement Plan focuses on maximizing student learning and attaining learning goals in the six domains of the State of Florida’s Academic Learning Compact (i.e., discipline specific content, critical thinking, communication skills, project management, values and ethics, and other, miscellaneous discipline specific outcomes). Initially focused on undergraduate academic and co-curricular programs, and the general education curriculum and later on graduate education, this plan is to provide a mechanism to accelerate and sustain a paradigm shift from instructor-centered to learner-centered pedagogies. Five primary goals have been established for this QEP: (1) improve student learning, (2) refine program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments, (3) increase use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies, (4) build communities of learners, and (5) provide related opportunities for faculty and staff development. Specifically, the plan provides for the financial support of 5-6 projects per year selected from proposals submitted by departments or individuals in academic affairs and/or student affairs. These projects involve (1) developing assessments of student learning, and (2) demonstrating improvements in student learning through the use of student engagement and active learning instructional strategies. In addition, the plan provides for faculty and staff professional development relevant to the goals of the QEP.

B. Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Using the following indicators, evaluate the acceptability of the QEP.

1 Focus of the Plan. The institution identifies a significant issue(s) related to student learning and justifies its use for the QEP.

The University of West Florida’s QEP encompasses four major thrusts related to student learning. These include instituting and/or refining all program- and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments, increasing the use of student-centered instructional strategies, building communities of learners, and providing faculty and staff development. The Committee applauds the aspirations of the University regarding building a learner-centered environment and acknowledges that these goals align well with other initiatives (e.g., Making Way for Excellence). However, the existing broad based plan lacks focus, leading to concerns regarding the feasibility of accomplishing the task. In addition, the measures identified for assessing student learning are largely process oriented and address the goals and objectives only indirectly through student engagement.

(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.
2. **Institutional Capability for the Initiation and Continuation of the Plan.** The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.

The institution has assigned qualified individuals to administer and oversee the implementation of the QEP; however, there is little evidence that this management team includes key persons, such as deans and department chairs, who have major roles in the outcomes and success of the plan. The co-direction for implementation of the QEP has been assigned to the Director of the Center for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment and the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. The Center has a rather small staff but would assume a large responsibility in this implementation effort as described. The Center at one time had two instructional designers, but with the establishment of the Academic Technology Center, these two positions were moved to that center. While three faculty fellows will be employed through release time to work with faculty through the Center, there is little evidence that these additions to the Center’s staff will be sufficient to implement the plan. No plans were provided to indicate that the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs will be relieved of any existing responsibilities, that new staff will be added, or that staff will be reassigned to assist in the oversight and administration of the Student Affairs side of the plan.

Additional resources may be required to fund class release time for faculty fellows, additional staffing, or reassignment of staff time. Furthermore, additional information resources are likely to be needed to educate and support the campus community to enhance the implementation of the QEP. Additional acquisitions of monographs, reference resources, and electronic databases will be needed. Funding levels specified in the QEP do not appear to provide sufficient resources to implement the plan.

The committee did not find sufficient evidence that the institution has provided an adequate time line for implementing and completing such a broad Quality Enhancement Plan. The focus of accelerating and sustaining an instructional paradigm shift from instructor-centered to learner-centered is not likely to be accomplished in the time line set forth in the QEP as it now exists.

(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.

3. **Assessment of the Plan.** The institution demonstrates that it has the means for determining the success of its QEP.

The institution has planned to evaluate progress in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the QEP by employing two general approaches. One deals with evaluation of the individual projects that will be planned, implemented, and evaluated by individual units within Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The other approach is broader, incorporating and expanding on the first by providing an overall evaluation of the QEP itself over a period of several years. Both approaches will address the following overall goals and objectives:

- improving student learning
- refining program and course-level student learning outcomes and related assessments
- increasing use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies
- building a community of learners
- providing related opportunities for faculty and staff development

The institution needs to re-align its assessment plan with the revised goals and objectives of the QEP, continuing its emphasis on systematically monitoring progress toward accomplishing its defined goals. The assessment plan should include multiple measures that include both direct and indirect measures of student learning. Direct measures may include such approaches as course embedded assessments, portfolios, or standardized achievement
measures. Indirect measures might include attitude and opinion measures such as the NSSE, focus group interviews, or locally prepared surveys and questionnaires. Whatever specific assessment approaches are adopted, the emphasis of the assessment efforts should be on direct measures of student learning with the indirect measures complementing those efforts.

(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.

4  **Broad Based Involvement of the Community.** The institution demonstrates that all aspects of its community were involved in the development of the Plan.

As outlined in Section II E. of the QEP report, involvement of all aspects of the University community in the development of the plan has been extensive. The Committee encourages the QEP Steering Committee to continue to seek broad-based input from all constituencies when working to refine the focus and set realistic goals and objectives related to student learning.

Is the Quality Enhancement Plan part of an ongoing planning and evaluation process?

Outcomes from these assessment approaches need to drive improvement initiatives that not only facilitate student learning but also link to and complement other institutional, divisional, and department strategic planning objectives. Such alignment could be facilitated if the outcomes were a part of the University Planning Information Center (UPIC) database that currently serves as an important resource for integrating strategic planning, budgeting, and evaluation processes.

C. Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

*Use this section to highlight strengths that have not been addressed above and to provide advice to assist the institution in strengthening its QEP.*

The committee affirms the work and commitment that have been given to the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan. It is evident that the University of West Florida is committed to improving student learning and has already made laudable progress in a fairly short period of time. We are also encouraged by the enthusiasm to develop a culture of assessment on campus. As the institution works to refine the focus of the QEP, we encourage that they coordinate these efforts with the other university initiatives designed to realize the hallmarks of a UWF education. We are encouraged that there is great commitment to and momentum toward the improvement of learning for undergraduate and graduate students. The committee has identified the following suggestions to enhance the likelihood of success in the development and implementation of the QEP.

- The goals of the QEP are ambitious. It is important to keep in mind that real change takes time. We encourage the institution to take incremental steps in the pursuit of their strategic goals related to becoming a more fully learning-centered institution. Approaching the Quality Enhancement Process as a building block in the foundation of the broader institutional vision will serve as a model for next steps and continued enhancement of student learning.

- Paradigm change involves major organizational change that will impact everyone and every unit of the university. Every system and process, old and new, should be reviewed in order to identify barriers to change, pressure points to motivate change, and direct and indirect support for the change process. This change is truly about the university being a successful learning community that must draw on every discipline. It strikes the committee that the university is asking itself to become an active and engaged learner similar to the expectation that it has of its students. Based on the information that was shared during the visit, it appears the university must change from a paradigm of the traditional, state-supported public institution to becoming more like the autonomous or quasi-autonomous, private institution. This change has come about from external pressures from the state legislature.
Changes of this magnitude and comprehensive nature require significant resources. We suggest that the institution more carefully evaluate whether sufficient resources have been provided to support the ongoing efforts of the QEP. We are concerned that the designated funding for the projects of the QEP is not sufficient to sustain the efforts that result.

Moreover, we are concerned that many of the human resources which have been identified to implement the QEP have generally taken on this task as an "add on" set of responsibilities. We encourage the institution to address the need to provide additional fiscal resources to allow release of time from other responsibilities to focus on the significant amount of work that will be required to realize the goals of the QEP. We are concerned that without a commitment of these resources the best people will be overtaxed and experience burnout.

Furthermore, additional information resources are likely to be needed to educate and support the members of the campus community to enhance the implementation of the QEP.

The inclusion of Student Affairs in the QEP process is commendable. To make learning a more seamless process for students, we would encourage better coordination between student affairs and the academic programs. As presented, these units appear to be working independently toward a common goal. To make a more significant impact on student learning, faculty and staff need to be more collaborative in designing joint initiatives to meet the goals of the plan. Additionally, it is important to consider the impact of the QEP on other academic support (e.g., academic advising, student success programs, registrar) and administrative (e.g., student financial assistance, cashier's office, auxiliary services, safety and security) units.

The materials designed to market the QEP are impressive. It appears, however, that there are members of the faculty and staff who are unsure of the direction of the QEP or its impact on their work. Communication is critical to ensure that the QEP is an integrated process across the institution. As UWF works toward the completion of their QEP, we encourage regular (e.g., monthly) sharing of information, lessons learned, and best practices across academic departments, student affairs and other administrative units.

The role of students in identifying student learning outcomes can significantly enhance the development of the outcomes. We saw glimpses of good practice incorporating students into the process, but would like students to be more fully participative in the development and implementation of the QEP, especially in the design and implementation of the individual projects.

To be authentic in their focus to improve student learning, faculty and staff must demonstrate their own capacity to be learners. We support the emphasis placed on the inclusion of faculty and staff development as key to the QEP process. Departments appear to be at different levels of readiness to develop comprehensive assessment plans. These differences need to be acknowledged to ensure that the faculty and staff development initiatives are not a one-size-fits-all approach.

In order to recognize that UWF has achieved their identified goals, we suggest that they include external measurements that would allow them to compare their success against the achievements of others institutions. Similar to using NSSE as a measure of student engagement, they need to identify nationally-normed measures of student learning.

Goals in the QEP tied to national standards (e.g., NSSE) may be better expressed as absolute targets (i.e., change in means or frequencies) as opposed to relative ones (i.e., rankings and percentiles). The concern is that relative measures measure not only changes of UWF but also the changes that the other schools are undergoing. Thus, it could be possible to have extensive absolute changes occur on a measure, but because the other schools have also made extensive progress, UWF's relative measure remains unchanged over time.

Another aspect of the QEP that we would like to affirm is the increased use of active learning and student engagement instructional strategies to enhance student learning. As UWF makes a shift to a learner-centered paradigm, some faculty will require pedagogical development to retool their delivery of the curriculum.
Given that between one-third and one-half of the instructors are not regular faculty, we encourage attention be given to how supplemental faculty and graduate teaching assistants will be included in the QEP. While they may not have direct involvement in the development or implementation of the plan, their impact on student learning cannot be ignored.

The current RFP process specifies that projects may be course or program based and may be proposed by any faculty or staff members in academic and/or student affairs. The RFP process would be strengthened by having proposals submitted not by individuals but by departments as a consensus of the departmental faculty or staff. Having proposals submitted through the relevant dean or vice president of student affairs for endorsement would strengthen the present management structures and permit greater synergy to be pursued at the college/divisional level. A project for course changes within a program would be strategic if there were a clear consensus by the faculty or staff regarding the project’s contribution to the programmatic learning outcomes and if the project involved multiple stakeholders in its implementation and not just one or two individuals.

Projects will require resources for implementation, a fact that is recognized and budgeted for in the QEP. However, these projects will most likely result in ongoing resource requirements, a fact that is not presently recognized in the QEP.

Limiting projects to one year of funding may limit the quality and extensiveness of the activities proposed. Multi-year projects may permit greater innovation and a cycle of experimentation, assessment, and adjustment making change happen faster and more likely to produce results.

The development of a rubric to evaluate the proposals that is shared during the RFP process would communicate the vision of the QEP by stressing what is measured and thus what is important. Elements of the other suggestions listed here could become the elements of the rubric.

The rationale section of the RFP needs to ask specifically how the activities proposed will directly and indirectly positively impact student learning on the specified learning outcome. Evidence needs to be included to demonstrate that the submitters understand “why” their proposed activities should “work” and how to make adjustments as necessary during the implementation of the project.

By focusing on a common set of learning outcomes for all the projects, synergy can be achieved in (1) developing assessment methods, (2) assessing the success of techniques of active learning and student engagement for improving learning outcomes, and (3) delivering relevant professional development.

Identifying best practices of learning at other institutions can inform UWF as they work to become a stronger community of learners. We recommend some of the following resources:

- The Association of American Colleges and Universities is an organization that provides tremendous resources, including publications, professional development opportunities, and consultative services. They have resources, professional development opportunities, and consultant services on intentional and liberal learning, pedagogies of engagement, general education and assessment, and institutional change.
- Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA may serve as a model for engaging students in the design and assessment of projects. We encourage a review of the Washington Center for Improving Quality at Undergraduate Education at Evergreen State which can be accessed through their website at www.evergreen.edu/washcenter.
APPENDIX A

Roster of the On-Site Review Committee
(include name, title, institution, city and state of each member)

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APPENDIX B

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs
Evaluated as Part of the On-Site Review

Examples:

New Orleans, LA: B.S. in Accounting offered at 322 St. Charles Street
Charleston, SC: General education courses, BBA, BS in Accounting offered at 611 Calhoun Ave.
BS in Accounting and BBA offered to approximately 125 students on the Web

Bachelor's and Master's degree programs and doctoral courses at Ft. Walton Beach Campus, 1170 Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd., Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547

Bachelor's and Master's degree programs and doctoral courses at Eglin Air Force Base Center, Bldg. 251, PO Box 1527, Eglin Air Force Base, FL 32542

Bachelor's and Master's degree programs at Naval Air Station Center, 250 Chambers Avenue, Suite 23, NAS Pensacola, FL 32508-5259

Bachelor's degree programs in Criminal Justice, Special/Elementary Education, and Social Work, courses at the graduate level in teacher education and educational leadership at University Center, Chipola Junior College, 3094 Indian Circle, Marianna, FL 32446

Three Certificate Programs, three Bachelor's degree programs, and three Master's degree programs as well as 108 courses enrolling approximately 825 students offered through on-line distance learning.
APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations Cited in the Report of the Committee
(List recommendations consecutively. Include the Core Requirement or Comprehensive Standard number, the recommendation number, the recommendation.)

Examples:

CR 2.11, Recommendation 1:
The Committee recommends that the institution provide an audit for the most recent fiscal year.

CS 3.2.10, Recommendation 2:
The Committee recommends that the institution provide evidence that the president and senior staff are evaluated on a periodic basis.

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.

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.

CS 3.4.1, Recommendation 5:
The committee recommends that for each educational program for which academic credit is awarded the university evaluate program and learning outcomes.

CS 3.5.1, Recommendation 6:
The committee recommends that the university provide evidence that graduates have attained those college-level competencies identified in the general education core.