

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students

of

NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY - LOUAIZE

Beirut, Lebanon

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Prepared after study of the institution's
February 2013 self-study report and a visit to the campus
April 14-17, 2013

The members of the team:

Chairperson: Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, C.M., President, DePaul University, Chicago, IL

Ms. Rebecca Brodigan, VP institutional Planning and Assessment, Bowdoin College, ME

Dr. John Burns, Associate Vice Provost Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Boston College, MA

Dr. David Fedo, Former Executive Director and Visiting Scholar, Wheelock College Center for International Education, leadership and Innovation, Singapore, Wheelock College, MA

Mr. Robert Fitzpatrick, Professor and Emerging Technologies Librarian, Plymouth State University, NH

Dr. Jill Reich, Professor of Psychology, Bates College, ME

Mr. Fouad Sayess, Vice President of Finance, American University in Cairo, Egypt

Dr. Elizabeth Tobin, Dean of the College, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Illinois College, IL

This report represents the views of the evaluation committee as interpreted by the chairperson. Its content is based on the committee's evaluation of the institution with respect to the Commission's criteria for accreditation. It is a confidential document in which all comments are made in good faith. The report is prepared both as an educational service to the institution and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the institution's accreditation status.

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
 New England Association of Schools and College
 Preface Page to the Team Report

Please complete during the team visit and include with the report prepared by the visiting team

Date form completed: April 17, 2013

Name of Institution Notre Dame University-Louaize

1. History Year chartered or authorized Aug. 14, 1987 Year first degrees awarded June 30, 1991

2. Type of control: State City Other; specify: _____
 Private, not-for-profit Religious Group; specify: Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary.
 Proprietary Other; specify: _____

3. Degree level:
 Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a	Graduation ^b	# Degrees ^c
Associate						
Baccalaureate	6374	527	8044.8	90%	75%	916
Graduate	111	333	308.9	90%	24%	157

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

5. Number of current faculty: Full time 228 Part-time 441 FTE: 416.75 T.D. 7

6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (Specify year: 2012)
 (Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Revenues	Expenditures
Tuition	Instruction
Gov't Appropriations	Research
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	General
Auxiliary Enterprises	Auxiliary Enterprises
Other	Other (depreciation)
Total	Total
<u>\$58.746</u>	<u>\$42.528</u>

7. Number of off-campus locations:
 In-state 2 Other U.S. _____ International _____ Total _____

8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:
 Programs offered entirely on-line None Programs offered 50-99% on-line None

9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?
 No Yes; specify program(s): All programs offered by the

10. Other characteristics:
University one or two year(s) contract for full-timers or semestrial for part-timers. No contractual relationship with other institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Notre Dame University – Louaize (NDU), a Lebanese university located in Zouk Mosbeh (near Beirut); Barsa (North Lebanon), and Deir El-Kamar (Shouf Region), has applied for candidacy for initial accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The institution is pursuing accreditation because it seeks recognition that the American-style education it offers meets American standards for institutions of its type; because the NEASC standards will both propel the institution forward and instill a culture of constant attention to quality; and because the rapid expansion of higher education in Lebanon has created a national concern for quality and the institution seeks an external and respected quality review with which to assure potential students and employers, particularly in the absence of quality assurance standards and frameworks in Lebanon.

In 1978, the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, in cooperation with Beirut University College (now Lebanese American University), founded the Louaize College for Higher Education. The College was erected as an independent university by the Republic of Lebanon in 1987 and renamed as NDU. The university was to be a “national university, Catholic in spirit, Maronite in tradition and American in system.” Following the social upheaval of the 1990’s and resulting geographic separation of the Christian, Muslim and Druze populations, and wanting to continue its mission of providing education to all the populations of Lebanon, NDU established campuses in North Lebanon (NLC) and the Shouf region (SC) to provide those populations with access to their degrees. These campuses are relatively small with 7% and 4% of the overall student population respectively.

Today, the institution has more than 7,300 students studying in seven schools: Architecture, Art and Design (FAAD), Business and Economics (FBAE), Engineering (FE), Humanities (FH), Law and Political Sciences (FLPS), Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS), Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS). Together, these schools provide 56 undergraduate and 19 graduate degree programs, including a doctoral program in Educational Leadership overseen and granted by St. Louis University. They are staffed by 228 full-time faculty members, 441 part-time faculty members and 250 staff members. Eighty-eight percent of the student body consists of undergraduates. Ninety-three percent of the undergraduates and 25% of the graduate students are studying full-time. All instruction is in English, while operations and office interactions are conducted in a mix of English, Arabic, and French.

NDU is a Catholic university owned and influenced by its sponsoring religious congregation, which assumes full financial responsibility for the university. An independent board of trustees governs the university, and the religious congregation’s leadership council maintains reserved powers as detailed in a recently amended set of university bylaws. The president is elected by the congregation subject to the approval of the board of trustees.

The institution's four-year, 120-credit, American-model bachelor's degree is recognized by Lebanon as the equivalent of the *Licence*, the three-year first degree as defined in the Bologna Accord. Because of Lebanon's primary and secondary school structure, students may test into or automatically qualify for sophomore status as is typical in such situations.

The institution's student body is primarily composed of Lebanese, though there are international students in attendance. Its attractiveness and competitive advantages are precisely its English-language instruction and American-model curriculum (increasingly considered an advantage for one's professional career), its Catholic identity (considered a quality indicator in Lebanon and also a signal of safety and respect for students of other faiths), and its competitive price among top-tier Lebanese institutions. The preponderance of its student body was raised in Arabic-speaking households and went to high school in French-speaking schools, making an English-language higher education both a personal challenge and a proud achievement.

Following the institution's initial inquiries regarding NEASC accreditation, a visit by Commission personnel took place in 2008, with a three-person NEASC delegation following in June 2010 to assess the institution's compliance with NEASC's *Standards for Eligibility*, as detailed in the *Requirements of Affiliation for Free-Standing Institutions Abroad*. Notre Dame University—Louaize was found substantially in compliance and was granted eligibility status on November 10, 2010. In so doing, the Commission praised their progress to date, encouraged them to work toward the *Criteria for Candidacy*, and particularly to attend to four concerns:

1. Continuing to increase the number of Americans on the governing board, administration, faculty, and professional staff;
2. Evaluating the effectiveness of its governance structures and using the results for improvement (with a particular attention to broadening the faculty's role in institutional governance);
3. Assuring that the library and information resources and student access to these resources is sufficient to support the institution's mission; and
4. Developing and implementing a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning.

In addition, the institution was informed that candidacy would require that "by the time of the Candidacy review, the governance will have changed so that the Board of Trustees appoints the institution's president."

NDU requested a review for candidacy status take place in the 2012-2013 academic year. NEASC agreed and assembled a team. The chair of the visiting team, Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, CM, president of DePaul University, conducted a preliminary visit to the institution in October 2012. During that visit he met with the institution's administrative leadership, a trustee, the steering committee for the self-study, and representative groups of deans, students and faculty on the main campus, and the abbot of the sponsoring religious congregation. During this preliminary visit, agreement was reached on all necessary aspects of the team's visit.

The visit took place on April 14-17, 2013 with an eight person team consisting, in addition to Rev. Holtschneider, of:

- Ms. Rebecca Brodigan, VP institutional Planning and Assessment, Bowdoin College, ME;
- Dr. John Burns, Associate Vice Provost Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Boston College, MA;
- Dr. David Fedo, Former Executive Director and Visiting Scholar, Wheelock College Center for International Education, leadership and Innovation, Singapore, Wheelock College, MA;
- Mr. Robert Fitzpatrick, Professor and Emerging Technologies Librarian, Plymouth State University, NH;
- Dr. Jill Reich, Professor of Psychology, Bates College, ME;
- Mr. Fouad Sayess, Vice President of Finance, American University in Cairo, Egypt;
- Dr. Elizabeth Tobin, Dean of the College, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Illinois College, IL.

The visit included focused sessions with institutional representatives on each of the eleven NEASC standards, as well as the four areas of focus defined by the Commission in its November 10, 2010 letter granting eligibility status. Separate open meetings were held for faculty, staff, students, and trustees as well as numerous individual meetings. While the bulk of the team's time was spent on the Beirut campus, pairs of team members spent the better part of a day at the North Lebanon and Shouf campuses. The final meeting with campus representatives took place on the main campus.

Format of the Report

The following report begins with an observation regarding the institution's continuing compliance with the original eligibility criteria and is then organized according to the eleven NEASC standards. The four focus areas and one directive identified for particular attention in NEASC's letter of November 10, 2010 are discussed within the appropriate standard as follows:

1. "Sufficient American representation" is treated in Standard Five (Faculty).
2. "Evaluation and resultant improvement of governance structures with a particular focus on the appropriate faculty role in institutional governance" is treated in Standard Three and Five (Organization and Governance; Faculty).
3. "Sufficient library/information resources access" is treated in Standard Seven (Library and Other Information Resources).
4. "Comprehensive assessment of student learning" is treated in Standard Four (The Academic Program).
5. "Appointment of the president by the board of trustees" is treated in Standard Three (Organization and Governance).

Acknowledgements

The team wishes to thank Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Ameen Rihani, Assistant Vice President and Chair of the Accreditation Executive Committee, Dr. Kamal AbouChedid, the members of the Steering Committee, as well as the chairs and members of the many committees and university bodies who labored diligently and competently over many months to prepare the *Self-Study*. The *Self-Study* constitutes a comprehensive and fair characterization of the institution in relation to the NEASC standards. The backup documentation assembled in the workroom and on disc was complete and well organized. All arrangements related to our visit, from IT support to hotel accommodations and transportation to social occasions, were made with intelligence and care.

We also thank the members of the NDU community—faculty, staff and students—who attended one or more of the many sessions held during our visit, as well as individual members of the staff and faculty who made themselves available on short notice to answer our questions. The NDU community's interactions with us were characterized by thoughtfulness, candor, and civility. We felt very welcome.

Finally, we wish to thank and acknowledge Reverend President Walid Moussa, who has provided strong and sustained leadership for NDU's drive for accreditation. Fr. Moussa has been unfailingly attentive to every stage of the candidacy process and has clearly set the tone

of candor and openness prerequisite to an effective peer review process. We congratulate him and his colleagues for their fine university and for their efforts to make it even better.

The Nature of Candidacy for Initial Accreditation

Candidacy indicates the institution has achieved initial recognition and is progressing satisfactorily toward accreditation. The decision to enter into this process is a decision to maintain a level of quality recognized by the Commission as appropriate for American institutions of higher learning and also to lead the institution forward in a focused, strategic manner. The Commission looks to accredit organizations that are self-critical, evidence-driven, and intent upon providing quality education for students and useful intellectual contributions to society.

The visiting team was charged with seeking solid evidence of the degree to which the institution is guided by well-defined and appropriate objectives, that it has the evidence of substantial achievement of those objectives, and that it can be expected to meet the Commission's eleven *Standards for Accreditation* within a maximum period of five years. Furthermore, the institution must show that it is currently in substantial compliance with Standard Eleven (Integrity), and has maintained substantial compliance with the Commission's *Requirements of Affiliation for Free-Standing Institutions Abroad*.

THE NEASC STANDARDS

Requirements of Affiliation for Free-Standing Institutions Abroad

As a condition of candidacy, NEASC requires that institutions have maintained substantial compliance with the Commission's *Requirements of Affiliation for Free-Standing Institutions Abroad*. As part of this visit, the chair met with the institution's president, reviewed each of the requirements, and received his testament that each of these standards is presently met. In addition, the team serially reviewed each of these requirements at the conclusion of its work and agreed that they saw either evidence of further progression on each requirement since the last visitation report or at least no retreat in this regard.

On Requirement 12, (Financial records), the team has some questions as to whether the financial records are fully revelatory of the institution's financial condition, but we also agree that the institution has not gone backward since the last review when this situation was judged minimally satisfactory. We will, therefore, discuss our concerns when considering the financial standard appropriate to Candidacy (Standard Nine).

On Requirement 23, ("Has sufficient staff, with appropriate preparation and experience, to provide the administrative services necessary to support its mission and purposes"), the visiting team agreed that the university minimally met the standard, but that the continued growth of the university's enrollment without substantial growth in its staffing has added visible pressure to doing so and that there may be specific offices that do not meet this requirement, even if the institution as a whole does.

Standard One: Mission and Purpose

Identity

Notre Dame University - Louaize (NDU) is a private, Lebanese non-profit Catholic institution of higher education which adopts the American system of education.

The religious affiliation of the University does not impose any sectarian obligations on faculty members, staff, or students. The cultural and spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary highlights a belief in a unified Lebanon, a belief in education as a means of protection against fanaticism and corruption and a dedication to freedom of thought and expression. The University espouses such values and beliefs irrespective of color, creed, race, or gender and seeks to enhance these values through the liberal education it offers and the career preparation that caters to the real needs of Lebanon and the region.

Mission Statement

As a Catholic institution inspired by the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, Notre Dame University - Louaize (NDU) seeks to provide comprehensive quality education that fosters excellence in scholarship, lifelong learning, enlightened citizenship, human solidarity, moral integrity, and belief in God. In designing its curricula, NDU is committed to the philosophy and standards of the American model of liberal arts education. Conceiving itself as an authentic academic community, NDU promotes diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good. Its profound aspiration is to prepare its students to be future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love and freedom.

The present Identity and Mission Statements, revised in 2008, emerge from a succession of statements over the institution's history that are remarkably consistent in their key social purposes: (1) creating one Lebanon whereby higher education provides cross-sectarian understanding and more productive vocational opportunities for youth out of the cyclical violence that has characterized a country deeply-divided by religion; (2) strengthening Lebanon's good functioning by providing an educated, English-competent workforce committed to morality and shared civic values; and (3) supporting and strengthening the Lebanese Maronite Catholic community by providing additional opportunities for Catholic higher education and an English-language, American-style alternative to the French-language Catholic institutions of higher education already present in the country. They are the reasons driving the formation, growth, new locations, and liberal arts based curriculum of the university.

This mission, welcoming and assisting Muslim, Druze, and Christian students alike by creating an institution that seeks and serves students regardless of religion, is a particular point of pride among the institution's community and broadly described among many as a powerful contribution to their nation. A revised mission statement will be presented to the board of trustees for its approval in fall of 2013, but does not alter this mission of forming a traditional university in service of this larger social purpose. The current statement appears prominently on the institution's website and is mentioned in many of the institution's publications.

The traditional hallmarks of higher education institutions—teaching, research and service—are all present. They form the heart of the institution's activity and are understood by the board, faculty, and staff to contribute to this end.

The institution aspires as well to instill a number of virtues and civic behaviors in its students as a result of the educational environment and process. The concepts of *"enlightened citizenship, human solidarity, moral integrity, and belief in God, promoting diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good, preparing students to be future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge"* are implemented primarily through the imposition of traditional liberal arts curricular requirements.

At present, the inculcation of these values is not systematically incorporated into the General Education requirements' learning goals, nor are the outcomes monitored or measured. There are plans for the Institutional Research Office to begin assessment of mission effectiveness and for the university to implement a new course proposal form in which faculty must indicate which learning activities or goals advance the mission goals of the institution in the fall of 2013. In 2014-15, an ad hoc committee is to prepare a more specific and comprehensive policy and implementation plan for the institution's diversity goals.

Our team sees much success on these ideals already. We consistently met impressive students who embodied many of these virtues. They were grateful for the opportunities provided by the institution and identified with the mission themselves. In addition, the institution is highly religiously diverse, an accomplishment in current Lebanon only attainable through intentional action. **Before the next visit, it will be important for the institution to begin assessing mission outcomes and use the findings to provide direction in curricular and co-curricular planning and resource allocation.**

Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation

Notre Dame University is to be commended for real and obvious progress toward becoming an institution setting clear plans based on solid evidence, implementing and evaluating those plans, and then adjusting its actions accordingly. As might be expected for a young institution, the work is not yet fully designed or fully implemented, and is not always connecting one level of planning to another. There is a particular and notable lacuna in the lack of multi-year financial planning fully integrated with all other planning. The institution clearly sets ambitious goals for itself at the highest levels of the organization and achieves much, but it needs to continue work that will make multi-year financial planning systematic and present at every level.

Planning

Planning efforts began in 2007-2008. Academic departments have drafted extensive three-year business plans as well as a template for a university business plan. The plans attend to student enrollment, retention, faculty development, and budgeting. Different constituencies at the university have been involved in the development of these plans and have spent a considerable amount of time in completing a frank SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). According to the *Self-Study*, these areas were discussed in detail by the board of trustees. In 2012, all offices (including academic) were asked to create business plans. At the same time the university created a new financial analyst position who is overseeing the planning process. Based on the visiting team's meetings and a review of institutional documents, however, it does not appear as if a unified overall university business plan has been created to date. Nor can we find evidence that these academic departmental plans were used in developing the not-yet-approved 2012 university strategic plan. That said, a very thorough outline exists and could serve as the template for a university business plan.

Overall plans for the external review of academic programs exist, but happen only sporadically and with the use of outside professionals rather than academic colleagues.

An ad hoc faculty concerns committee was charged with reviewing faculty working conditions and preparing plans to address teaching load, service, and research requirements. Recommendations were made and await a response from the senior administration.

In 2009, a faculty committee was charged with: reviewing faculty assessment tools; evaluating catalog content and catalog course descriptions; with establishing data set systems; standardizing faculty personnel files and recruitment procedures; and standardizing faculty transaction procedures with administration. We could not ascertain the status of these recommendations.

Another faculty committee was asked to review assessment tools created and to look at lessons learned from the 2009 review. Based on meetings and institutional background documents, it is not evident whether or not this has happened.

Another planning support action was the creation of a data structures committee and a committee to develop key performance indicators. The university hired an institutional research director a year earlier, but she moved into another position at the university after only a few months. A new institutional research director was hired, and he has been in the job less than two months. It is premature to evaluate the institutional capacity in this area and to determine whether or not the institution uses data in a systematic way. These responsibilities are being assigned to this office and will become an important component of an overall institutional evaluation plan.

Physical planning is addressed in depth in Standard Two and Standard Eight, but is worth noting in this section. The physical plant continues to grow. **The Master Plan has not been formally updated since it was created in 1994. Several buildings are under construction or being planned and widely discussed on the campus, but there is no formally updated master plan to guide future facilities planning.**

Evaluation

In 2006, an outcomes assessment faculty committee was created at the department level. A year later, faculty were defining learning outcomes at the course level. Student exit interviews and surveys were shared with faculty. Today, there is evidence of fairly widespread collection and use of exit interview and student course evaluation data. The university has come a long way in this area. While there is no formal institutional assessment plan, many components are available, and faculty are doing a great deal of assessment at the course level.

Departments have mission statements and learning goals and all faculty members have them for their courses. Learning goals are collected, compiled, and reviewed. Notre Dame is seeking several specialized accreditations (e.g., ABET), and these faculties are asked to have student learning assessment tools. If successful, these efforts could serve as a model for other academic programs.

A student course evaluation system is in place, and forms are being collected across the university. The feedback management software system (eXplorance Blue), which will help with data management. This system seems to be working, although the university is dealing with a problem that is common in American higher education, namely, low response rates.

As identified in the *Self-Study*, there is a need to coordinate, integrate and evaluate planning across the university. This is a relatively young institution, and, as such, there is much work to

be done in order to have the systems and data available to support planning and evaluation. It is not clear who is ultimately in charge of overseeing planning. A strategic planning committee is or has been created; however, no dedicated staff take planning to the next level or evaluate planning in a systematic, broad-based, and integrated fashion in order to achieve the many priorities and ambitions.

In summary, Notre Dame University would be well served to have someone specifically charged with the management of planning efforts. These efforts should include the collection and analysis of data, and a mechanism for reporting back to the campus community on the status of their efforts. The institution has myriad planning efforts, but lacks a system to track progress and report back to the campus or to external constituencies. The 2012 plan clearly spelled out goals and specific objectives, and while this plan was never approved, it could serve as a jumping off point to organize and articulate a planning vision for the future.

Standard Three: Organization and Governance

Since 1987, the institution has grown and has revised its organization and governance accordingly. The current constitution and the bylaws were approved in 2000 by the Supreme Council and the board of trustees. The 2000 constitution describes clearly the mission, the responsibilities of the board of trustees, and the method of appointing the president. It makes clear that the Council of Elders of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary is the Supreme Council and the highest executive body. Under this document, the president serves at the pleasure of the Supreme Council.

The 2000 bylaws describe in detail the mission and the governance structure of the university. They explain the governance structure from the existence of the University General Assembly down to the organization of academic departments as well as the responsibilities of individual faculty members. The bylaws also specify the titles of administrative positions.

These bylaws have become partially outdated since 2000. For example, the president has begun the practice of meeting with a cabinet, a body not listed in the 2000 bylaws. As another example, several new positions have been hired; the university now has an Office of Alumni Affairs not foreseen in the bylaws.

As described below, the administration has drafted three new documents: a new constitution and bylaws for the board of trustees; a new constitution for the university; and new bylaws for the university. None has been fully approved by all necessary bodies, although the president and his staff expect all approvals to be complete by June 2013.

Constitution and bylaws for the board of trustees: Since 1987, the university gradually evolved its governing system toward the 2010 election of a new board of trustees and a 2009 constitution for the board of trustees. That constitution clearly delineates the responsibilities of the board, its relationship to the Supreme Council, and to the president. The draft board of trustees' constitution changes primarily the method of selecting the president. The board approved this change at a meeting of its Executive Committee in November 2011 (*BOT Minutes*). The abbot and chair of the Supreme Council of the Order approved the amendment by means of a March 2012 letter to NEASC's President and Director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, Dr. Barbara Brittingham. A new constitution reflecting this change will be considered by the board and the abbot in May 2013.

New university constitution: The president reports that the new constitution for the university, available to the visiting team, is completed and waiting for the revised bylaws so that the two can be approved at the same time. The draft revisions to the constitution include small changes in the language and description of the mission and contain the changes to the president's selection process.

New university bylaws: The new bylaws were not available to the visiting team. According to reports from the president, his staff, and students, these revisions have been underway for multiple years—the efforts of a variety of committees. In the past months, the administration sought feedback from all constituencies and has begun what they expect to be the process of producing a final document. The revisions reportedly update the university governance system in light of changes that had been made in practice.

Despite the administration's effort to clarify the board's responsibility for hiring and evaluating the performance of the president, even these draft documents contain ambiguity about which body has the ultimate control over the selection of the president. The president is appointed by the board, but its choice is a candidate from the Order presented by the Supreme Council. Members of the board explained to the visiting team their understanding that they might object to the one candidate put forward by the Supreme Council only on grounds that the appointment might contravene Lebanese law or that the candidate's background raised grave concerns. Members of the board did not understand themselves to have independence in this decision. The president explained that the board's lack of clarity stemmed from the fact that the abbot's approval of this new shared method of presidential appointment had not yet been communicated to them, but would be on the agenda at their May 2013 meeting.

The order exercises considerable authority over the daily running of the university through its official presence on campus. Despite being appointed by the board, the president specifically serves at the pleasure of the Supreme Council, even under the new constitutions. Five of the board of trustees must be members of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin; the director of finance, and director of administration are constitutionally required to be members of the order as of 2000. The Supreme Council has appointed the directors of the two branch campuses.

The board membership may range from 15 to 25. Many of the current trustees represent the public interest. Distinguished members of the banking community, government ministers, and successful businessmen appear in the board membership. The full board, based on the minutes available, appears to meet once per year. The executive committee of the board met nine times in 2012. The board does not appear to have adopted a conflict of interest policy.

Conversation with board members demonstrated their concern for the best interests of the university in providing an excellent education and promoting the mission. The board formally approved the university budget at its January 2012 meeting, and minutes of the board's executive committee record discussions of both the operating and capital budgets. These minutes also show that the president keeps the executive board apprised of significant appointments and initiatives, such as the application for accreditation. There is no record that the board has developed any policies for evaluating its own effectiveness, nor for a periodic

review of the president. (3.4) Systematic communication and internal structures are still being developed. Chairs have been chosen for standing board committees. It is unclear that these committees have yet convened.

The president is fully responsible for the direction of the university and directing the university is his only job, as attested by existing and draft governance documents, as well as conversation with many employees. All members of the administration ultimately report to the him. Even those who were appointed by the abbot and Supreme Council, such as the directors of finance and administration (who, as just mentioned, constitutionally must be members of the order), and the directors of the two branch campuses, confirm they report to the president. The visiting team learned new practices have recently been adopted, in which the order will no longer appoint its own members directly to these positions, but will offer their services generally to the university writ large, while the president then appoints them to particular positions.

The president has at his disposal university bylaws, a faculty handbook, and a student handbook (*Academic Rules and Regulations*) describing well-organized administrative structures adapted to the university's purposes. The neatly laid-out administrative structure does not, however, function as effectively as described. The process of making proposals, such as changes in policies, promotion in rank, or hiring new personnel, is widely reported to be lengthy, time-consuming, and often unproductive. Students and faculty have reported that proposals, even to spend funds believed to be allocated to their university entity, sometimes languish in an administrative limbo. Communication back to proposers is lacking.

The president is responsible for the allocation of resources and the visiting team could see that these resources are allocated for essential purposes, such as salaries, scholarships, construction and maintenance on campuses, and the purchase of equipment necessary for educating students in appropriate disciplines. There is not, however, a transparent process for budgeting.

According to the bylaws and handbooks, the university plans for sufficient staff with proper qualifications to carry out the mission. In practice, the university does not yet employ sufficient staff in all areas; for example, the Department of Computing Services on the main campus has not yet hired sufficient staff. In other areas, the university has difficulty hiring and retaining sufficient qualified staff, as is the case with the library, in part because of low salaries. Further, almost all of the faculties report the need for additional faculty members, as the growth in the size of the student body continues.

The president and the administration have created multiple official avenues for participation by faculty and students in appropriate decision-making. Again, reports from faculty and students indicate that these official avenues are only partially successful in providing a satisfactory voice

or appropriate responses. The elaborate committee structure incorporates faculty at the branch campuses. It is effective, if cumbersome, in providing ample opportunities for faculty to develop and improve the curriculum. The structure provides opportunities for the Student Union to develop and present ideas to appropriate administrators; students reported satisfaction with their ability to communicate to administrators at all levels.

In many areas, however, the process leaves these constituencies with a concern that their participation is not given adequate consideration. For example, faculty concerns about salary and workload policies led in 2008 to the establishment of an ad hoc Faculty Concerns Committee reporting directly to the president, because the established standing committees failed to yield clear responses from the administration. Members of the Student Union reported that they wait many months for responses to proposals and requests made to administrators.

The budgeting process is confusing to both faculty and staff, as well as inadequate to promoting appropriate participation. The deans, department chairs, and unit directors do not have access to information about the status of their budgets during the fiscal year. Admirable attempts to require of all units a clear budgeting plan in 2012 offer an excellent opportunity to develop a more systematic process of dealing with budgets.

Staff have no governance unit and no clear avenue through which to participate in governance. The director of administration is their only official voice and that office does not seek systematic feedback. This director's goal is that the human resources office serve as the voice of staff to the administration.

The vice president for academic affairs reports directly to the president. The *vice president for academic affairs* is a member of the cabinet, university council, and the board of deans, the most significant decision-making bodies of the administration. All deans of faculties, the dean of student affairs, the registrar, directors of admissions, the libraries, computing services, and continuing education divisions report directly to the vice president for academic affairs. The directors of the two regional campuses report to the *vice president for academic affairs* concerning academic issues.

The university is clear in all documents, such as the *Self-Study* and the *Faculty Handbook*, that the faculty have the responsibility to create and administer the curriculum. This process is carried out through a logical system of curriculum committees through which new courses and course alterations receive scrutiny by a department, a faculty, and a university-wide committee, as well as the vice president for academic affairs. In addition, course coordinators work with all faculty teaching a section of the same course to ensure similar content and quality of teaching and learning. This process functions well in integrating faculty at the three campuses. Faculty

at branch campuses reported regular communication with their counterparts at the main campus.

The great majority of the institution's students take courses at the main campus. Approximately 615 students at the Northern Lebanon Campus and 320 students at the Shouf Campus take courses at these branches. Each branch campus has a director and an assistant director for academic affairs, to which coordinators of the faculties represented there report. Full-time faculty at the branch campuses are officially integrated into their appropriate departments and faculties. The policies concerning curriculum, promotion, and hiring are administered similarly. The lack of clarity about budgeting is mirrored in these settings, where staff have little access to regular budget reports.

The elected Student Union is the primary organ of student governance and is represented on every campus. Its activities include bringing speakers to campus, organizing service actions, and making proposals and suggestions to the Student Affairs Office. Many faculties and departments also sponsor clubs for their students, which offer opportunities for career development. All students have the opportunity to provide their evaluation of faculty through evaluations of courses, now collected electronically.

In concert with its preparations for candidacy, staff have articulated a series of well-crafted policies as represented, for example, in the *Faculty Handbook* regarding faculty responsibilities and in the draft *University Bylaws*. The institution has been slow, however, in communicating these policies to the campus constituencies. For example, members of the board of trustees were not aware of a timeline for approval of their new bylaws.

Institutional Effectiveness

The institution is engaging in a process of re-evaluating many aspects of its organizational structure and systems of governance, from the bylaws of the board of trustees to those of the student union. In part as a result of its preparation for NEASC candidacy, the university is creating a structure suitable for the greatly increased student body. There is widespread willingness among all constituencies to engage further in examining governance and organizational structures. As yet, it has not developed a plan for systematic review of the effectiveness of its organizational structures.

Standard Four: The Academic Program

Notre Dame University offers 56 bachelor's degrees and 19 graduate degrees within seven faculties: Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design (FAAD), Faculty of Engineering (FE), Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE), Faculty of Humanities (FH), Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS), Faculty of Law and Political Sciences (FLPS), Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design (FAAD), Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS). The institution enrolled 6,900 undergraduates and 444 graduate students in 2012.

Lebanese undergraduates typically enter bachelor's degree programs in what the American system would consider the equivalent of the sophomore year after completing the thirteenth year of schooling and achieving their Lebanese Baccalaureate II (LBII). International students, or those who have completed 12 year programs in Lebanon's private "English" high schools, may take a 30-credit freshman year to qualify for entry into the degree program. Bachelor's degrees typically take 90-108 credits over three years, but architecture (182 credits) engineering (150 credits) and interior design (108 credits) take longer to comply with Lebanese licensing laws.

Courses are all taught in English and admission requires a minimum of 180 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language exam or 350 on the English Entrance Test (or its equivalent), but students with scores between 350 and 650 on the EET (180-243 on TOEFL) are required to take appropriate remedial English sequences as part of their first year. In addition all students are required to take six credits of English as part of their general education requirement. By faculty and student accounts, the level of English among students remains a limitation on the level of reading and writing that can be required in courses. There is no post-first year English requirement nor any Writing Across the Curriculum type program (*Self-Study*, p.36), but the university has established writing centers where full and part-time faculty assist students with developing clear papers and reports. **Still, the *Self-Study* legitimately notes that the lack of assessment of students' English proficiency in upper class years makes it difficult to know whether the program's English requirements are adequate.**

Course sequences for majors at both graduate and undergraduate levels are clearly published in the catalog in hard copy and readily accessible on-line through the well-designed website. The catalog description has typically published goal statements for each major, though these are not always characterized clearly as learning objectives for the program. If the university carries through with its projection (*Self-Study*, p.36) **to publish its 2014-15 catalog with goals recast as learning objectives and does so by the projected April 2014 date, it will be more useful for students seeking course descriptions for registration in fall 2014. Likewise** the catalog listing will be more effective if the faculties continue to purge dormant courses from their lists. The *Self-Study* notes as an example that 76% of the list of course offerings in the faculty of political

science had not been taught in 3.5 years. Clearly the ongoing cleaning of course lists will make them better representations of the actual program and make it easier for students to understand what is actually being offered.

The 2012-13 catalog comprehensively describes university rules and processes as well as the graduate and undergraduate program requirements. It clearly states the grading and attendance policies and the requirements for good academic standing and termination. The *Self-Study* analysis of course offerings indicates the availability of introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses in each program sequence. Distributions are sufficient to support the progress of students through departmental major core courses to more sophisticated electives, although it should be noted that students, particularly at the branch campuses, occasionally describe a requisite but minimal number of upper level courses. Faculty likewise note that courses whose enrollment falls below seven are treated as tutorials and compensated at a lower level than a full course. They also may not count fully toward a faculty member's teaching expectation and thus require teaching an additional full course.

Currently external program reviews have not been instituted, but the *Self-Study* clearly describes this as a weakness in curriculum development efforts. The vice president for academic affairs indicates that he has always been willing to support departments requesting external academic program review, but such support has not been requested by departments or deans. He recognizes the need for such a process and is committed to working with the board of deans to create a mandatory, external, periodic academic program review process for all departments. (*Self-Study*, p.37).

On the other hand, each department is headed by a full-time faculty member serving as chair and each faculty has a full-time faculty member serving as dean. All full-time faculty members serve as academic advisors and every student is assigned an individual advisor. There is no centralized academic advising center and individual faculty can be assigned upward of 60 advisees. Student applications to change majors or faculties are considered by the respective chairs and the board of deans if necessary.

General Education: The University Mission Statement emphasizes the development of "moral and citizenship values" as well as a general education in the arts and sciences. To that end all undergraduates must complete a 33 credit general education requirement that includes: six credits of English and three credits of Arabic; six credits of philosophy and religion; six credits in cultural studies and social sciences; six credits in citizenship, and six credits in science and technology. This is in addition to the nine credits in human and social sciences and six credits in the natural sciences and mathematics required in the thirteenth year—the LBII or the first year before entering the degree program. All departments are expected to contribute 20% of their courses to a general education "pool," from which different departments and faculties may

require specific courses be taken or even substituted to satisfy general education requirements for their respective majors. The *Self-Study* (p. 32) notes that general education courses have changed over the years without ever being formally reviewed, and in 2007-08 a general education committee was appointed to manage the program's requirements, but the committee process was never initiated. It points out current confusion in defining general education courses and requirements and the need for defining and assessing the learning objectives of general education *en bloc*.

While the institution has made significant progress in getting faculty to define course learning objectives on their syllabi and measure achievement of these objectives through imbedded examinations and exercises, the overall impact of general education on the whole person is never measured. While, assessment of general education goals course by course is arguably "adequate" as stated in the *Self-Study*, the university may want to consider whether a committee like the general education committee of 2008 would not be an effective mechanism for defining, maintaining, and assessing the intended impact of the general education program on students' education and formation.

Credit Hour Calculation: We have seen no formal statement of credit hour policy, but the clear expectation in all faculty teaching assignments is that a three credit course will meet three hours per week and include one hour of office hour time for both full and part time faculty. In practice, virtually all courses and laboratories offered in the past three semesters have required one weekly class hour for each credit offered. The syllabi indicate a set of reading and examination requirements equivalent to at least two hours of work outside class for each hour in class and large multi-section courses (all courses are taught with 30 or fewer students in a section), even when taught on different campuses, have common examinations and examination times. All multi-section courses have faculty coordinators to assure consistency in teaching and examination and the institution commits considerable effort to maintaining this consistency. Each semester is 15 weeks in length (Sept-Feb; Feb-June) so the integrity of the course credit is carefully maintained and monitored.

Graduate Programs: Graduate programs are clearly defined and where appropriate emphasize professional training. They and their admission requirements are comprehensively described in the catalog and online. Of 441 students registered in master's level programs in 2012, nearly half (186) were registered in the MBA program. The programs are clearly described in the catalog and are generally well-defined and coherent, culminating in a thesis or research project. Not as much progress has been made in recasting the goal statements for graduate programs into learning objectives as there has been for bachelor's degree programs and learning assessment is not clearly defined. No comprehensive alumni surveys of placements are done on a regular basis. So, while there seems little doubt of the integrity of the master's program,

greater attention to assessing the attainment of specific learning outcomes at the graduate level would contribute to greater effectiveness. The planned academic review process could likewise assure the continued integrity and development of the graduate degrees.

The *Self-Study* also notes the desire to engage graduate students more effectively in research across all programs. A program of university funded research assistantships (tuition remission and stipend) to link graduate students with research faculty has recently been initiated and faculty report they have made use of these assistantships in their work. This program, if successful, could greatly enhance the credentials, experience, and job prospects of graduate students in the academic programs and should be evaluated periodically for effectiveness.

Assessment of Student Learning: Based upon interviews, a review of supporting evidence, the E-series forms, and firsthand observation, the visiting team notes significant progress in encouraging faculty and departments to define their teaching goals as measurable learning outcomes. Faculty cited on-campus workshops they attended through the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE) as helping clarify the process, and certainly, the vice president for academic affairs, through the deans of the faculties, have made student learning outcomes buzzwords on campus, partially in anticipation of their candidacy for accreditation. They have established a syllabus template that is being used by more and more faculty clearly specifying course goals in the form of measurable learning outcomes. The template also states policies on attendance, grading, and academic integrity. A sample of syllabi indicates this template has gradually been adopted, often with faculty mapping specific course learning outcomes onto stated program learning outcomes. The primary technique for assessing program outcomes, in turn, is based on measuring imbedded course artifacts (papers, reports, exams). However, processes for accumulating and analyzing the results of these assessments at the department level have not been clearly defined. A relatively new performance evaluation protocol for both full and part-time faculty, combined with a recently implemented student course evaluation system accessed through Blackboard Vista, may create an increased emphasis on improving teaching which in turn may provide added support for effective assessment.

Departmental plans for assessment have not yet been shared among departments internally beyond the definition of learning outcomes. The processes for gathering data on learning outcomes program-wide, interpreting it and proposing changes based on the findings have not yet been fully developed. One department chair said she had used assessment data to support a request for a new course, but this practice has not yet been institutionalized. In 2010, the faculty of engineering began the process of seeking *Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology* (ABET) accreditation for their program. As a result the Engineering courses have made the most consistent progress in defining learning outcomes and the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics is planning to seek *The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools*

of Business (AACSB) accreditation for the business program, so this may help maintain the assessment momentum.

The final step in effective assessment is the implementation of a set of recommendations based on the assessment results. The institution employs a long process for proposing new or changed course offerings with successive approvals required from the chair, the faculty curriculum committee, the dean, the university curriculum committee, the vice president for academic affairs, and the president. This seems an unusually long sequence of required approvals for a new course and seemingly could be slowed at any step, even though faculty report that, with regard to curricular issues, most requests move along in a timely manner. It does not appear that typical protocols designating which decisions can be delegated to the discretion of the chair or faculty member are in place.

The visiting team notes great strides in developing an assessment procedure for its programs and on conceptualizing and measuring student learning at the undergraduate level. The institution seems genuinely committed, from the administration to the faculty, to developing effective assessment techniques guaranteeing continuous improvement in the education of its students.

Standard Five: Faculty

Overview

Notre Dame University – Louaize seeks academic excellence, especially in teaching and more recently in scholarly work, and strives to promote an academic culture within its seven faculties and throughout the university that is diverse and open, and emphasizes concern for the common good.

It is moving from an institution that campus administrators, faculty, staff, and students all describe with much fondness as a family acting on personal relationships and traditions, to one that must develop systems, policies, and procedures to guide and direct its actions in a fair, equitable, and strategic manner.

To this end, the university recruits and develops a full-time faculty with appropriate qualifications who are asked to demonstrate success in fulfilling the institution's mission. An additional group of part-time faculty, presently accounting for 56% of the annual credits awarded, is hired on a semester by semester basis with no written guarantee, but with a clear tradition of contract renewal and commitment to their students and the university's success.

Overall, the *Self-Study* was transparent and consistent with what we found on campus. All faculty on all campuses are committed to the mission of the university and work hard to meet their roles and responsibilities.

Composition

The categories into which faculty are organized are: tenured full-time faculty; non-tenured full-time faculty, and part-time faculty. Discussions with the deans of the respective faculties confirmed the *Self-Study* report that for the last three years, the university has hired between 20 and 25 new full-time faculty per year and plans to continue this rate for at least the next three and probably five years. The authority for deciding the number of new lines and where they will be allocated is thought to reside with the president who likely consults with the vice president for academic affairs before making his decisions, but this process is not clear to those in the departments, on the faculties, and among the deans.

Requests for full-time and part-time lines may proceed in an orderly fashion from faculty to department chairs to faculty deans to the vice president for academic affairs, or requests might be brought directly to either the vice president for academic affairs or the president. A little over half (54%) of new full-time hires are reported to come from the part-time faculty group—a

figure that seems consistent with the many full-time faculty we met who had begun their work here as part-time faculty.

Presently, full-time faculty teach 43% of courses. Sixty-six percent of full-time faculty are male, 34% are female; a ratio that has changed from 3:1 in 2009 to 2:1 in 2011. Almost all faculty at professorial ranks have advanced degrees; ninety-one percent have the doctorate—a ratio that has remained quite consistent since 2009. Graduate level faculty appear to be utilized across faculties—extending beyond the *Self-Study*'s assertion that they primarily provide professional, practice oriented, faculty in those areas requiring applied professional practitioners.

Over the next five years, the *Self-Study* projects that “various” faculties shall aim for a ratio of part-time to full-time faculty of 1:2. We learned that the Faculties of Business and Engineering expect to pursue specialized accreditation in their disciplines with business preparing to submit their application in fall 2014, followed by engineering. Although not yet established as a school, the expected Law and Politics faculty dean is already planning to seek U.S. accreditation of the law school as is the dean of the school of architecture when that school is eligible. Each of these specialized accreditation programs has specific requirements for full-time faculty, (e.g., ABET requires a 75% full-time faculty). These requirements will necessarily draw the availability of new full-time faculty lines away from other faculties. Without a university-wide strategic plan to articulate the desired part-time to full-time ratio for each faculty, these specific, short term goals will have significant long term effects on the faculties not pursuing specialized accreditation.

Teaching, Scholarship and Service: expectations and evaluation

Based on a system identified in fall 2011, weighting of the three areas of faculty responsibility for consideration for promotion were tentatively placed at 50% teaching, 30% scholarly work and professional recognition, and 20% for service. Consistent with the *Self-Study* report we learned that these allocations are tentative and subject to reevaluation, a topic that receives much attention and discussion by faculty but remains opaque. Whether it will be implemented, or when or where the decision will be made, remains unclear.

This situation mirrors several areas of faculty concerns (e.g., system for evaluation, use of quotas for number of faculty in rank or tenure, salary levels, and sabbaticals). Each of these areas has received significant faculty time and attention through ad hoc committees originating from and reporting to the president. Important recommendations have been provided by these ad hoc committees, but there appears to be confusion about where these recommendations stand: have they been denied or put on hold; are they still able to be approved and implemented if certain (unidentified) conditions obtain? In many ways, this

uncertain status may be especially detrimental to the well-being of the institution as it may have the unintended consequences. Faculty who have worked hard to provide the recommendations and who trusted that their concerns would be addressed might become discouraged and frustrated. As one person put it, “we cannot know for certain the outcome that our recommendations would produce but a lack of a decision is a decision to do nothing.”

Teaching

The majority of faculty echo the *Self-Study* report that teaching is viewed as a major emphasis of the university, one that they also view as its major strength. By current standards for reappointment, promotion and tenure, teaching accounts for 50% of a faculty member’s performance. Faculty teaching loads vary by seniority in rank with median loads ranging from a low of four for full professors to a high of seven for assistant professors. The *Self-Study* reports that since fall 2011, full-time faculty’s teaching performance is evaluated by a variety of measures including peer observations, student course evaluation, and a teaching portfolio. Given campus discussion, this report seems overly optimistic.

The university provides workshops and teaching enhancement grants to develop and build faculty teaching pedagogies, and classrooms are well-equipped with technology and relevant software.

Scholarship

The administration and faculty largely agree that they desire to strengthen the institution through increased faculty (and eventual student) research productivity. Yet, its importance relative to teaching, how to measure it, and the type, level, and manifestation expected is controverted and undefined. It seems that the university seeks to bring people onto their faculties who are trained, interested and participating in research and creative work. Yet, these junior faculty, brought in at the instructor or assistant professor level, have the highest teaching load (i.e., eight courses per year for instructors and seven courses per year for assistant professors). The university provides limited support through the Sponsored Research and Development Office, research centers, journals, travels grants, and support for a limited program of teaching release for research purposes (e.g., one course release for up to two consecutive semesters).

We agree with the university’s observation in the *Self-Study* that the lack of involvement of full-time faculty in research and professional practice is a weakness especially given their goals for

graduate and professional degrees. They report that scholarship requirements are not well articulated, a particularly relevant matter for a university with this diversity of disciplines, and that undergraduate student involvement in research is still elementary, in need of incentives and support.

The university reported in the *Self-Study* and to us that by spring 2014 the Faculty Concerns Committee will propose policies and procedures related to: (a) financial support for research related activities; (b) reduction in teaching load to allocate more time for research; and (c) development of an internal competitive grant system to support faculty in research. While relevant and appreciated, this projection seems overly optimistic given past practice. Too often the university reports that steps will be taken to review an area of interest to the faculty, an ad hoc committee is developed, and faculty appointed; they spend considerable time and effort carrying out their task only to find there is no response to their recommendations. Too often, the visiting team learned that one area or other had experienced this process, and that faculty could not tell us either the status of their recommendations or the likelihood that their recommendations would be acted on—either positively or negatively.

Service

Consistent with the *Self-Study*, faculty report that they engage in committee work involving academic planning, course and curricular development, student advisement, and faculty and university committees. But, there appear to be few opportunities for faculty to be involved in committees at the university level, particularly those involving the allocation of resources.

Overall, it appears that participation in committee service is strong and effective at the department level; that it becomes less clear how it works at the cross-faculty level, seemingly with the deans working well with their own faculty but having difficulty finding effective structures or strategies to work across faculties; and that, at the university level, faculty involvement in governance is insufficiently representative and ineffective.

Recruitment, Contracts, Tenure, and Promotion, Compensation: Full-Time

As described in the *Self-Study*, much progress has been accomplished in the area of full-time faculty recruitment and hiring, with appropriate steps and procedures being implemented from advertising through the offer. Contracts to full-time faculty are awarded only for one year and renewable for an additional year. Subsequent renewals may apply for up to two years. This approach is reported to be consistent with other Middle Eastern universities.

While the procedures appear to be clearly articulated, several criteria present challenges to the hiring of faculty, and especially those able to provide a U.S. perspective which is relevant to the pursuit of U.S. accreditation and identified in the Commission letter of November, 2010. For example, a one to two year contract is a challenge to the kind of job security sought especially when moving oneself and perhaps family to a new country; salaries are not competitive with other major Lebanese universities; expectations for faculty success, especially regarding research productivity remains in discussion and is unclear; and the presence or absence of tenure all serve to weaken the desirability of a position at the institution. In spite of these challenges, the university has been able to attract about a third of its faculty with U.S. graduate degrees.

We confirmed the *Self-Study* report that the university's tenure process is not currently active for reasons that no one was able to provide. It was reported that the institution will re-establish the tenure track rules and regulations by fall 2016, allowing faculty members at the associate rank to qualify. Opportunities for appeals of decisions should also be considered at this time. Presently, in this and other situations of concern to the faculty, grievances or disagreements are taken directly to the president for resolution.

The issue of a quota system limiting the number of associate and full professors remains fraught. The administration reports that the quota system, as presented in the institution's bylaws, has never been the reason that a faculty member was not promoted. Understanding of the university's approach to and use of quotas among faculty is unclear at best. More recently, confusion about quotas has been further sharpened by the perception that the growing number of faculty seeking promotion will require the implementation of some form of quotas.

Salaries have been a point of attention since 2008 when the Faculty Concerns Committee raised it to the University. At that time, an ad hoc Faculty Development Committee provided a comprehensive review of all faculty salaries and important steps were taken to implement a salary adjustment based on its results. Based on the evidence provided in the *Self Study*, current salaries appear to lag behind competitive Lebanese institutions further challenging the institution's efforts to achieve the level of new hires they seek.

Recruitment, Contracts and Compensation: Part-Time

Given the university's heavy reliance on part-time faculty, it appears to have few policies in place governing their hiring, contracts, and evaluation. Individual deans determine the number needed and make a request to the vice president for academic affairs. Once approved, individual faculties and/or the VPAA determine their minimum qualifications. Given the individualized approval system and the need to confirm enrollments before hiring, resulting

from a lack of projections of future need, classes may have begun before part-time faculty are identified and hired.

Part-time faculty are compensated per hour of teaching with rates based on highest degree earned. As with full-time faculty, their salaries were reviewed and adjusted based on the 2008 Faculty Concern Committee's report. Unlike the full-time faculty, part-time faculty salaries appear competitive

Their terms of appointment are for one semester, although the majority seem to be renewed for many consecutive semesters; whether that be automatic or based on evaluations is unclear to them or to us. In fall 2011 a system was implemented to evaluate part-time faculty using course evaluations and, in some cases, peer observations of classes. This system remains under review in content and process but progress is being made to develop a system of evaluation including feedback to the faculty member and opportunities for development. It should be noted that part-time faculty at the Northern Lebanon campus reported that this system is functioning well at that campus.

Based on head count, the greatest number of part-time faculty appear to be on the Faculty of Humanities with Architecture, Art and Design next highest, Natural and Applied Sciences next and then the remaining Professional Faculties of Business Administration and Engineering. This distribution across disciplines appears inconsistent with their stated use of turning to part-time faculty to provide "real world" opportunities for learning. A clearer picture of the use of part-time faculty would be provided by determining both the head count and the full-time equivalent (FTE) for the part-time faculty.

In spite of the challenges, the part-time faculty with whom we met on all campuses were uniformly committed to their students, the university, and its mission.

Governance

Faculty involvement in governance, particularly at the university level, appears to be an area still under development. It appears that faculty governance works appropriately at the department level but less well across faculties, and much work is needed at the university level.

It is reported that beginning in fall 2013, the vice president for academic affairs with assistance of appropriate councils, will establish committees, at the department, faculty, or university level, in order to ensure the following be implemented within three years: (a) curriculum development including subjects taught, methods of instruction, research, faculty status, admissions, and all student-related educational issues; (b) faculty status including academic

titles, appointments and re-appointments, tenure, promotion, and faculty dismissal; (c) development of policies governing compensation.

In addition, it is reported that there will be a committee of the faculty as a whole elected to disseminate the views of all full-time faculty. And, it appears that there will be some way—left unstated—for faculty to participate in financial policies and decisions affecting those areas for which faculty have responsibility.

The administration reports that these governance steps will be completed within the next two years because: (a) the institution's president and board will approve the governance framework and arrange for its dissemination within a year; and (b) faculties under respective deans shall develop relevant bylaws and procedures to carry forth governance policies within two years. However, our on-site discussions and observations cause us to wonder if these plans, although real to the administration, are likely or able to be implemented especially within the time frame identified.

Summary

There is much to praise in the institution's progress on faculty issues. They enjoy a faculty committed to its mission that works hard to contribute to its success. They have engaged in substantial review of the curriculum, the faculty, and related policies and procedures producing a set of data that will be useful in future internal decision making as well as internal and external reviews and analysis. Progress is being made in a variety of areas including establishing recruitment and hiring policies and procedures for departments; beginning to develop evaluation criteria for promotion and tenure; and creating an institutional review board which is so essential to implementing research.

Still, challenges remain that we call to their attention as they continue their progress towards accreditation.

- Ensuring a structure and organization of governance at the institutional level that allows for an ongoing faculty voice and perspective in matters of relevance and concern to the faculty such as appropriate contractual security, promotion, tenure or its alternative, numbers of faculty in professorial ranks. Most immediate to this concern is consideration of how to transform the ad hoc committee on Faculty Concerns into a standing committee of the faculty.
- Developing and implementing a valid and reliable system of evaluation able to be used at the department, faculty and institutional levels. Achieving and implementing such an

evaluation system is the foundation for consideration of several issues of concern identified above as well as for providing greater clarity to the role of research, faculty workload and achieving a competitive salary schedule.

- Clarifying several areas of immediate concern to the faculty including the use of quotas for professorial ranks, the abeyance of tenure decisions, and the role of research in faculty roles and responsibility.

Standard Six: Students

Enrollment and Student Profile

Total full-time and part-time student enrollment at all campuses of the institution as of fall 2012 stood at 7,367. Of that number, 88.7 % were enrolled at the main Zouk Mosbeh campus; 7.2% were located at the North Lebanon site; and 4% were studying at the Shouf campus. Full-time undergraduate students in the same year totaled 6,374, and full-time graduate students numbered 124. Part-time student headcounts totaled 527 undergraduate and 333 graduate students. The student population is overwhelmingly Lebanese, although the *Self-Study* reports that the 7,367 students represent 27 nationalities. The male to female gender distribution since 2007 averages 2:1. Of the total number of full-time undergraduate enrollees in 2012, 95% were first-year sophomore students and 5% were freshman students as a result of the Lebanese Baccalaureate system.

The institution projects significant annual growth in enrollment in the forthcoming years, though multi-year projections are not enumerated. The director of admissions told us that she hoped to enroll 800 additional students for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Admissions

The institution reports a strong increase of 74% in undergraduate applications over the period from 2006 to 2012. That growth, from 1,230 applications in 2006 to 2,136 in 2012, includes all three NDU campuses. The growth in applications has led to an increasing number of enrollees, from 945 new undergraduates in 2006 to 1,552 in 2012—"an average yearly growth of 11.2%," according to the *Self-Study*. Of the 2,136 applications for undergraduate admission received in 2012, 94% were accepted and 77.3% candidates ultimately enrolled. The 2012 graduate student application-to-acceptance-to enrollment figures show 111 applications, 83.3% acceptances, and 86% of the acceptances enrolled. Enrollment at the graduate level actually has decreased of late, however the institution reports that "this is mainly due to the introduction of new admissions criteria to the MBA program that has resulted in more selectivity of applicants."

The criteria for freshman undergraduate and graduate admissions to the institution are clearly stated in all appropriate documents and online sources, including the catalogue and the website. As the *Self-Study* reports, the selection process for undergraduates is based on the four following criteria: (1) *Test of English as a Foreign Language* (TOEFL) or the Writing Section of the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT 1) or *English Entrance Test* (EET); (2) SAT 1 Reasoning scores or NDU Entrance Exam (3) Secondary School GPA and (4) the formal application and the

accompanying application essay. A composite score system is used to accept or reject students, or “to place students in the different remedial levels required for each faculty [program].”

For sophomore-level applicants, the Lebanese Baccalaureate Part II, “or its equivalent,” and competency in English through the University’s *English Entrance Test* (EET), or alternatively satisfactory scores through the SAT or the TOEFL, are all necessary. Graduate-level applicants must possess a bachelor’s degree; according to the *Self-Study*, some programs may also demand additional requirements, such as successfully completing the *Graduate Management Admission Test* (GMAT) or the *Graduate Record Examination* (GRE).

The institution acknowledges that it needs to develop a more formal strategic plan “for targeting enrollment with the coming years,” and for developing a meaningful policy “that standardizes the services or facilities available to accommodate students with disabilities.” Neither the plan nor the policy is currently in place.

Retention and Graduation

The *Self-Study* acknowledges that, “This is the first time, and upon writing this section of [the] *Self-Study* during fall 2011, that the institution is measuring the retention and graduation rate of its students.” In carrying out this recent “snapshot-in-time” analysis, and reported in the S-series forms, the university believes that “the rate of first-to-second year retention for the first year (sophomore) full-time students” for the period covering the fall of 2005 to the fall of 2010 “hovers around 90%,” though there was some difference of opinion on the data’s reliability.

As for graduation data, the institution reports the average graduation rate “within 150% of the normal program length for the BS and BA degrees is between 73.81% and 80.2%.” The cohort used to determine these numbers was for students accepted in the fall of 2001. No such data was presented for graduate students.

The institution acknowledges in the *Self-Study* that it currently “lacks a formal process to track and disseminate retention and graduation data,” and that they cannot identify the reasons that some students do not persevere to graduation. The Institutional Research Office is projected to be charged with addressing these concerns beginning in the fall of 2013, and on our visit the dean of student affairs reports that the university is also contemplating seeking a guidance officer to deal with the issues that are placing enrolled students at risk.

Student Services

Student services at the institution are under the purview of the dean of student affairs, who reports directly to the vice president for academic affairs. The dean's responsibilities include oversight of the Student activities Office, the Community Service Office, the Student Life Office, Student Housing, Health Services, Counseling Services, the Financial Aid Office, and Athletic Services, among others. In addition, other student-related offices and services—the Writing Center, the Internship Office, the Placement Office, and Pastoral Work—are available for student assistance and engagement, although all of these offices report elsewhere. A *Student Handbook* is published. Further, students elect their own representatives to the Student Union, which serves as the collective voice of the institution's learners and who serve the student constituencies in their schools (faculties). The *Self-Study* states that, "Student rights revolve around their freedom to learn, to express themselves freely and to benefit from all [of] the University's facilities."

A recent *NDU Student Satisfaction Survey* found that "NDU students are in general satisfied with the services provided to them." A separate 2012 survey of on-campus residential students resulted in a similar response, and student opinion on the team's visit reported satisfaction with residential living at the institution. In the team's numerous meetings with students, we heard that the institution "is a great university, with a family atmosphere." One said, "life on campus is really good, with an open-door policy that makes the campus a very friendly place."

On the Shouf branch campus, a few students reported that they hoped that more courses could be offered to alleviate the apparent necessity to wait for a semester or year to complete their requirements. Some cited the alleged lack of Internet accessibility on campus, and the absence of adequate parking and recreational facilities on that same off-site campus elicited some concerns by a number of students. On the main campus, students opposed the policy of blocking social media and selective internet sites.

One noteworthy addition under review by the vice president for academic affairs is the establishment of an Academic Advising Office. Faculty serve as advisors to NDU students.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to NDU students on an individual, as-needed, and merit basis. The as-needed awards are work-study allocations totaling about \$420,000 in U.S. dollars in 2012. Merit awards are provided to students whose grade point averages are well above 3.0. According to the *Self-Study*, "At least one kind of financial aid is offered to an average of 25.8% of students per semester."

Standard Seven: Library and Information Resources

The mission statement for the institution's library resources (the Mariam and Youssef Library, the two branch campus libraries, and various research collection libraries) clearly articulates a sound aspiration congruent with the university mission. The library system supports the university, alumni, and the general public. Conversations with librarians and support staff indicate a clear understanding of the library mission and its relation to institutional goals. The organizational structure leads from the president to the vice-president for academic affairs to the director of the library.

The library website itself has an effective, uncluttered, and innovative design making materials discovery unusually transparent. The institution is to be commended for having a library link prominently visible on the website. This link is an important indicator of the importance of the library as integral to the overall mission. The implementation of EZProxy code permits hassle-free access to both public and proprietary information resources by all students, faculty, and staff registered in the school's database regardless of their primary campus location or affiliation. Sound policies regarding collection development, extensive inter-library loan capabilities, and materials management are easy to find on the website. Public resources are freely available on the Web.

Students access the library's primarily Dewey classified holdings via an OPAC supported by Summon discovery software. Online full-text book subscription services effectively double the roughly 100,000 title print collection. Well-chosen full-text (and citation) periodical databases supply most journal needs not met by the active print journal collection. Appropriate licensing agreements invite exclusive subject access to specialized databases where they are most needed and support the observation that the library system makes careful use of its resource allocation.

The institution has wisely selected the unique *RCL Database* (Resources for College Libraries) as both a selection and a powerful collection assessment tool. *RCL* identifies a suggested core collection of about 80,000 books in more than sixty academic subject area divisions. Titles are selected from a variety of juried sources and represent the world's most respected academic contributions to educational advancement.

While *RCL* will help ensure wise acquisition decisions, it has also identified collection weaknesses. *RCL* shows that the NDU core collection level hovering around 5% (well below the 40% benchmark that might be expected from an institution of 8,000 students offering such a large number of programs). The planned integration of the eBook collections into the main holdings database [thereby allowing *RCL* to see and count them] is likely to raise this percentage but not nearly to 40% (or whatever the institution determines its ultimate desirable

goals in various disciplines to be). It is, of course, up to the librarians to determine optimal collection levels. On the positive side, this is all clear evidence of an above average acuity of best practices in collection development, and proper funding should lead to strong and rapid progress. Unfortunately, the institution has not provided any financial information in the standard seven "Data First Forms," so it is not possible to comment on planning and resource allocation. The *Self-Study* does not disclose the percentage of each student's tuition supporting the libraries.

The library's assessment initiatives (*i.e.*, surveys; collected comparative institutional data in the self-study's *Appendices*; and collections of library specific quantitative data, to mention just a few) show a clear understanding of the technological needs and expectations of its patrons. In particular, the library has garnered much useful information from a well-designed survey (*Appendix 7.8*) measuring student and faculty perceptions and desiderata. Aside from a few student comments betraying the inevitable jealousy of the new library at nearby Lebanese American University, open ended responses point to a legitimate desire for more computers (combined with a better computer maintenance program), an increase in quiet individual study stations, and more group-study areas away from the those who need quiet study space. Informal conversations with students support the survey's findings. While interlibrary loan within and from outside the NDU library system allow access to materials from the main and other libraries, branch libraries still need professional staffing.

The *Self-Study* states, "A new library and information commons space has been designed in response to the growing collection of the library and the need to provide students with open stacks. Construction is planned to start in 2014." The library staff is proud of the ongoing floor plans and design for the new construction.

The *Self-Study* understates the low level of professional library staffing at the main and branch libraries, but does not attempt to disguise it. The current two professional positions is low in relation to both aspirational and comparative institutions identified. Exhibit 7.5 (*Appendix*) shows comparators employing a high of 33 professional positions (Villanova University) and a low of 7.5 (St. Bonaventure). The supporting document (*Appendix 7.5*) provides compelling evidence of a need of 1.95 professional positions per 1,000 FTE to achieve parity with aspirational libraries—indicating an ultimate goal of 16 professional positions. There are no American Library Association accredited librarians or their equivalents at the branch campuses.

While it is unlikely that the institution will need to hire fourteen professional librarians in the near future, there was much discussion during the visit of hiring many more faculty. No mention was made of hiring librarians. Currently, service areas such as the reference room are not staffed at all. With or without the *Self-Study's* forthright evidence, the conclusion that the institution's library system operates with a very low number of professionals is inescapable

Since the subject was addressed in the *Self-Study*, the visiting team can attest that library literature verifies that U.S. professional staffing averages one per 507 students—correlating exactly with the number sixteen derived from the evidence provided in the *Self-Study* (Applegate, 2007, “Charting academic library staffing...” p. 67). One can easily imagine the exhausting efforts of two professional librarians addressing the needs of 8,000 students. The nine paraprofessional positions mitigate but do not obviate the need for professional librarians, particularly in the public services areas where, according to NEASC standards, students should be “appropriately directed to sources [...] to support and enrich their academic work.” The *Self-Study* admits to “the ongoing problem of recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of qualified staff” (p. 57). Yet, it appears unlikely that current salary and benefit levels will attract the needed professionals.

The institution is exemplary in its charter membership in Lebanese library associations, personal professional memberships, and the holding of elected professional association offices. All of these affiliations identify NDU and the Mariam and Youssef Library and its staff as a valuable and valued voice in national cooperative library networks. This impressive involvement cannot be overstated. The institution has been very supportive of staff development. Discussions with those who have attended conferences verify numerous beneficial enhancements to library services, best practices, creativity, and positive morale.

The *Self-Study* forthrightly states, “Documentation demonstrating that students acquire increasingly sophisticated skills in evaluating the quality of information sources appropriate to their field of study is not readily available” (*Self-Study*, p. 59). While there are efforts at library instruction—particularly the heroic effort to use a PowerPoint presentation to evenly introduce library resources to all first-year students and students enrolled in remedial English courses, and while a plan exists to fulfill NEASC and college-library best practices to help students “acquire increasingly sophisticated [research] skills,” success appears thwarted by a combination of the insufficient number of qualified personnel to provide instruction and faculties that appears to have little “buy-in” to the value of incorporating subject-specific library instruction to the lifelong learning needs of their graduates. This standard will require much work.

Mention is made of instructional technology in this chapter; however, chapter eight more fully addresses the role of the Division of Computing Services in achieving educational and administrative needs. The library has appropriate technologically equipped instruction areas—computers, projectors, Smart Boards, etc. But it will certainly need more in order to meet its stated information literacy goals. Current professional staffing and an apparent low level of faculty commitment to information literacy goals and to the cultivation of lifelong learning skills make a prediction of desirable library instruction areas moot. Based on discussions with the

library director, there does appear to be a sincere effort to make this an important planning point in the discussion of the new library design where perhaps, some definitive direction might be arrived at.

The institution has evidenced remarkable truthfulness and introspection in this chapter of the *Self-Study*. Pages 59 and 60 outline a roadmap for addressing the problems they have identified, specifically staffing levels, international affiliation, strategic planning, and collection development. The roadmap specifies dates for accomplishing these goals. Discussions with the library director and the text of the *Self-Study* articulate a clear statement of how the library hopes to proceed. The chapter itself exudes a convincing sense of commitment, thoughtfulness, professionalism, and confidence in the future.

Institutional Effectiveness

Refreshingly, with respect to *Library and Other Information Resources*, the institution indicates a moderate level of assessment and planning—to the point that one would be willing to say that assessment is indeed a part of the library culture. The ability to complete the assessment cycle by acting on the *Self-Study* findings and on the assessment tools articulated throughout this chapter will depend on an openness of library funding information and a clear indication of the institution's commitment to library and information resources in its ongoing strategic planning.

Applegate, R. (2007). Charting academic library staffing: Data from national surveys. *College & Research Libraries*, 68(1), 59-68. Retrieved April 6, 2013, from <http://crl.acrl.org/content/68/1/59.full.pdf>

Standard Eight: Physical and Technological Resources

Physical Plant

The main campus became operational in 1998, the North Lebanon campus in 1999, and the Shouf Campus in 2001. Surface area at the main campus is roughly 125,000 square meters (m²), with 7,660 m² and approximately 5,000 m² at the north and south campus locations, respectively. At the main campus, the largest allocation is to parking at 45,000 m², followed by faculties at 17,200 m², dormitories at 13,600 m², sports facilities at 9,500 m², academic facilities at 5,150 m², green areas at 5,000 m² and library and research centers comprise 4,400 m².

The main campus and branch facilities have been planned with care and offer students, faculty and staff a quality environment. The recently built student housing offers single and shared room accommodations and has ample open space for students to gather. Wireless access is available throughout the main campus and in select areas on the branch campuses.

A main campus master plan was designed in 1994 but is not fully implemented. The plan has been modified to meet newly identified needs including the addition of multi-story parking, a Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design building, storage, and a new library planned for construction in 2013. Also added to the plan is space for the physical plant and cafeteria which are under construction. In addition we heard oral plans for a new church, a medical school, and hospital which would likely be located away from the main campus, and general agreement that classroom and faculty offices would have to be expanded to meet the additional student enrollment projected in future years.

The institution is working with a consultant to plan a more green campus with an aim to reduce CO₂ emissions by 20% by 2020.

Due to regular power outages which could last up to 12 hours a day, the institution operates a power generation facility which takes over when power is interrupted, currently a frequent situation in Lebanon. Critical equipment, such as servers, computers, and research equipment are linked and can connect uninterrupted. A backup power supply can maintain for six hours in the event of a major failure in the main power energy generation system.

With the introduction of the Faculty of Arts, Architecture, and Design building in April 2013, the pressure on classroom availability has been somewhat mitigated. This cannot be said for office space, especially for faculty. The part-time faculty does not have offices and there is not sufficient space to meet vacancies as well as planned future hires of faculty—projected at about 20-25 per year. The board of deans will be asked to plan for faculty offices in spring of 2013. An updated multi-year campus plan is necessary to ensure adequacy of space for both the

academic and administrative areas. The engagement of faculties is key in determining future classroom and faculty space needs.

The institution's three campuses are only partially handicapped accessible. Some buildings do not have elevators; therefore access to upper floors is restricted. In the past two years, the physical plant department with the assistance of an outside consultant has been chipping away at improvements in disability access but much work remains. All new buildings, comprising about 25% of total usable space, are in compliance with Lebanese law. Old buildings still need improvements including adding elevators and ramps. The consultant has completed a list of required work. The administration needs to establish a timeline and allocate resources for completion.

CCTV cameras do not cover all critical areas of the campus, such as faculty area entrance and hallways between the various faculties. In discussion with physical plant staff, assurances were made that work in this area will be completed by end of summer 2013.

With respect to fire safety, new buildings and most importantly student housing are in compliance with regulations. All fire safety recommendations, however, including urgent ones, have not been implemented. An action plan and a timetable for completion of work is needed.

Some branch classes in science and engineering are taught on Friday at the main campus. Students are bussed. As branches could be a one hour drive away, the administration may want to consider adding more resources at branches to reduce the frequency and need to attend classes or to use certain high-end computer labs.

There is no unit budgeting making it difficult to properly plan and allocate resources. For example, the Shouf campus development is made on an "as needed" basis, including investments in technology, hardware, and software planning. Linking to academic need is hindered without guidelines and procedures. Purchases of equipment are dependent on people in certain areas rather than a properly planned approach that looks at need, and then prioritizes, and allocates resources accordingly.

Student survey results taken in 2011 indicate a number of concerns. Thirty-eight percent felt that overall satisfaction with facilities was very poor, poor or fair; 34.9 % felt the same about class sizes; 47.9% had similar concerns with classroom heating or cooling; 40.4% had white-board concerns; and 51.7% expressed concern about smart-board availability. There also were complaints about delays in taking care of maintenance issues mainly due to understaffing. A consultant had recommended an increase in qualified technicians. The administration believes that steps have been taken to address these issues. An updated survey is suggested to confirm improvement in satisfaction.

Technology Resources

Both academic and administrative units agree that technology equipment requests are provided for by the administration. Deans in particular were positive about the responsiveness of the administration in meeting capital equipment requests made to support newly hired faculty, replace equipment, and support teaching in classrooms and labs. The university Division of Computing Services has managed over the years to write original software for online functions; their work has been positively received by all. In-house software programs include: online registration; online grade submission; online student advising support; student smart-cards supporting dorm and library access; online tuition payment, financial aid, and student clearance; online admissions; archiving; and more. The computing services department also incorporated finance and asset inventory software. This small team, under the management of a seasoned director, has been able to provide quality services and products and even push units to adopt more efficient approaches to business processes.

The concern with the proliferation of systems, even as they may be integrated, is the demand on expert staff to maintain accurate and comprehensive documentation of system details and all links made between systems. This becomes critical, especially when changes or upgrades are required. So long as the expert and knowledgeable team is in place, the institution can and should be able to manage. For the long term, however, the institution should consider the introduction of a university focused and fully integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) to ensure the integration of applications in managing the various functions.

All faculty, staff, and students are provided email addresses and can access online services through internal network user accounts. Blackboard serves as the course management system. Faculty have special passwords to access Blackboard, and 50% of the courses offered make some use of this classroom management software. Faculty advisors have access to the student information system through a separate password, which they change each semester. Students use online methods to access their records; view exam and course schedules; check their grades; make payments; and register for classes. Student records data bases are maintained separately from email and other systems. All data on the various servers are backed up redundantly and duplicated up to three times a day to a separate server not connected to the intranet. All servers are backed up nightly. Backup tapes are physically delivered to an offsite location once a week.

Almost all classrooms are equipped with computers, LCD projectors, Internet connections, and interactive smart-boards. Video conferencing among the main campus and branches, and other locations, is possible.

The institution's intranet is secured behind a firewall and has encryption features to protect data transmissions. The Division of Computing Services monitors access to the Internet. Sites deemed inappropriate are blocked, including social media, discussion forums, instant-messaging and voice-over-IP programs such as SKYPE. Faculty can request lifting of "misidentified" blocked sites. The University Council agreed upon a social media policy in November of 2011. This has yet to be implemented as guidelines are still in the works and are awaiting approvals. Clarity of access is a major concern for students and faculty. While on an individual basis, access to YouTube and Google can be made, it is not optimal. A clear policy covering access to social media is suggested.

Standard Nine: Financial Resources

While the institution has been strengthening its financial position over the past few years, this has been directly attributable to the substantial increase in student enrollment, which increased by 34% between 2009 and 2012. About 90% of university revenue depends on student tuition and fees. In order to diversify its revenue sources, the university is planning to expand its fundraising activities, but at this time fundraising represents only a fraction of accumulated assets and amounting to \$1.8 million raised over a five year period. University resources are substantially utilized in support of the academic mission and programs.

Between 2011 and 2012, the net assets of the institution increased by \$7.3 million, going from \$73.8 million to \$81.1 million. Total assets in 2012 amounted to \$105 million. Short term debt was reduced from \$6.9 million to \$5.4 million. Operating revenue increased from \$43 million in 2011 to \$49.8 million in 2011. Financial aid went down from \$9.6 million in 2011 to \$8.9 million in 2012. Positive cash flow increased from \$15 million in 2011 to \$18 million in 2012. In 2012, the reserve fund amounted to \$12.4 million, an increase of \$1.5 million from 2011.

The introduction of *Generally Accepted Accounting Principles* (GAAP) is still a work in progress. Its full implementation could significantly change the university financial presentation. This coupled with the lack of multi-year fiscal planning, could present a challenge to the university in the event of an enrollment scale-back due to political or economic circumstances. Proper financial planning and the engagement of key constituencies in its development are critical, especially in the next few years as the institution endeavors to expand academic programs and make an extensive number of institutional investments. Pressure on salary expenses, so far largely contained, could erode current margins. This, coupled with plans to increase staffing levels in a number of areas, needs to be carefully planned within a multi-year financial planning model to ensure sources and allot uses of fund balances.

Audited financials for FY2011 and 2012 were provided. The independent certified public accountant notes that the audit was conducted in accordance with "Auditing Standards Generally Accepted in the United States of America," but makes no mention of whether the audit conforms to U.S. *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

As the institution receives no U.S. federal funding, there is no need for a U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Circular A-133 audit. The auditor management recommendation report of 2011, noting a number of control and organizational improvements, have not yet been acted upon. The auditor, therefore, ended up repeating those recommendations in the 2012 management report. Of note, is the auditor's concern with lack of policies and procedures in most areas.

All net assets are presented by the auditor as unrestricted with no temporarily or permanently restricted funds as the institution has shifted to GAAP reporting. The self-study notes that “Starting in 2010, the financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)”. This is contradicted by the non-classification of restricted and unrestricted funds and the lack of doubtful account calculation. The finance director is aware of these issues and recognizes that more work is needed to identify proper classification. Once review is made there could be an adverse impact on the financials as funds assumed to be unrestricted become obligated for either the short or long term.

Investments are largely held in bank savings account and government treasuries. While there is a standing board Finance Committee, the committee does not maintain minutes of meetings, and there is no policy to guide university investments. A comprehensive policy based on a risk tolerance assessment and investment strategy should be developed to define the types of investments that administration can engage in, the percentage of investment in each type and the frequency of rebalancing the portfolio. Clear policies should be developed for banking authorization, wire transfer limits, and check signatory requirements.

It is also not clear what authority the board’s finance committee or the board of trustees itself has in the approval of major capital projects. Defining board responsibility and authority with respect to financial activity is needed.

A control mechanism for expenditures is in place as all expenditures are authorized by either the president or director of finance. While this approach assures control, it also creates a bottleneck which can delay activity. Deans for example do not have the authority to manage expenditures in their faculties (schools). They must receive advance approval before making decisions requiring funding. Because approvals are made on a case by case basis, deans and unit directors do not have the ability to assess overall needs nor to prioritize needs within an agreed upon allocation of funds.

Various academic and administrative units noted the lack of clear guidelines for budget preparation. Many did not know their approved budget amount, and there are no regular reports to track actual expenditures against approved budgets. While all claimed that their needs were met and that their requests were largely approved, they were concerned with the dependency and lack of accountability that this process creates. The involvement of key units in planning, prioritizing, and resource allocation is not systemic as many decisions seem to be made on the basis of individual requests made as needs arise. The integration of academic and financial plans is not obvious. There is no strategic plan to guide and inform financial planning.

There are limited written policies governing fiscal activities, such as budgeting, risk management, contracts, grants, fund transfers, etc. There are no policies on gift acceptance.

Designated gifts, such as for financial aid, are not comingled with general funds but allocated directly to students. The administration recognizes the need to develop policies and procedures in these areas, and some rough drafts are being prepared. The administration has plans to draft these in the next couple of years.

Standard Ten: Public Disclosure

Notre Dame University has a rather complete set of standard documents describing itself fairly and accurately, available both in hard copy and also accessible through the website. The full catalog is available online and is easily accessible and searchable and includes all information on curricular and co-curricular programs, degree and entrance requirements, and information concerning branch campuses. The student handbook covers advising policies, academic policies and rules, grading policies, registration and financial aid for both undergraduate and graduate students.

The *Self-Study* identified several lacunae, however, and committed to resolving these matters in future years. The student handbook was last updated in 2009-2010, for example, and the university intends to put a process in place to review and update policies on the website. There are discrepancies between the printed and Web versions of the catalog, as well as an outdated listing of courses that includes courses which have not been taught in recent years. The university does not publish financial reporting data or details on its international study-abroad opportunities. Nor can the institution report information that it does not yet track, such as retention and graduation rates. The same is true of typical debt load at graduation. To satisfy this standard going forward, the university will need to attentively see that each requested piece of information is tracked so that it can be made available as required.

There are public relations staff members in a variety of offices that work together as an informal team, and work on publications and public events. These offices include the Press attaché, events office, internship office, and a career planning office. There is a spirit of cooperation and widespread sense of shared mission, and these offices come together to help out each other in planning and publicity for the more than 500 events hosted annually.

The university has just completed a thorough branding study, with the help of professionals in London and the United Arab Emirates, and will be instituting a new branding strategy in the near term. A new director has been hired and additional staff will be hired to oversee this effort. Part of this effort includes a project to make information more easily found on the website.

Currently, each office at the university is free to produce its own publications, and this can lead to redundancy and inconsistency in reporting data. Different faculties use their different shields on publications, and it is not always evident that they are part of Notre Dame University. The new office of branding will have overall responsibility for reviewing publications for consistency of look and feel.

Standard Eleven: Integrity

Notre Dame University is an institution subscribing to and advocating high ethical standards in its operations and dealings with its many stakeholders. It has a culture of honesty and candor which made the visiting team's work refreshing.

Policies unequivocally dictate ethical expectations of students, faculty, administrators, and staff. The mission statement intones a deeply felt role as a religious educational institution dedicated to promoting morality, understanding, and ethical behavior; these are at the very core of the mission.

The prospective student, or his or her parents, along with faculty, staff, and community members cannot misinterpret the promise enshrined in the institution's values statements: "*Integrity* – Teaching, scholarship, and student service within the University community is characterized by intellectual honesty and a sense of personal morality."

More specifically, appropriately redundant policy postings are manifest throughout the website, catalog, student and faculty handbooks, course syllabi templates, and promotional publications. The *Self-Study* distinguishes three policies regarding academic integrity (p.79): (a) the *Academic Integrity Policy (Appendix 11.2)* appears on the website under the heading "Academic Dishonesty," is repeated on the course syllabus templates (*Appendix 4.4*), and repeated yet again in the *Faculty Handbook* (p. 79) and the *Student Handbook* (listed under "Academic Rules and Regulations"); (b) the *Ethical Conduct Policy*, addressed to "executive officers, faculty, staff, student employees, and others" appears on the website and is repeated in the *Faculty Handbook*. (p.20); (c) the *Policy of Conflict of Interest in Research* appears in the *Faculty Handbook* (p.60), and directs the Conflict of Interest Review Board to review alleged violations.

A notice of non-discrimination policy appears on page 11 of the *Faculty Handbook*, and again on page 28 of the *2012-2013 Catalog*. Numerous postings of the mission statement (specifically the value labeled "Identity") appear frequently in publications and websites.

The board of trustees' by-laws imply conflict of interest concerns, but are not explicit. For example, Article Two of the *Constitution* states, among its other declarations, that: "(e) The members of the BOT are not entitled to any compensations or remunerations for their efforts," and, "(d) Dual membership in the BOT and the University Council is not allowed." However, neither of these statements covers the spirit of conflict of interest as the Commission intends.

Another area that bears clarification is institutional research. The *Self-Study* states the "URB [University Research Board] has a limited role in the supervision of ethical conduct in research since its mandate is exclusively limited to sponsored research" (*Self-Study*, p.81). On the other

hand, the *Faculty Handbook* clearly defines “Research Ethics” and “Freedom of Research” (*Faculty Handbook*, p. 46).

The reader will find the issue of integrity mentioned in nearly every chapter of this document. This further attests to the fact that everyone involved in nearly any aspect of the institution is keenly aware that integrity is a core element of the mission. We encountered poignant reminders regarding the expectation of integrity in informal conversations with faculty and students, in formal presentations, and in many printed documents. The hope, even the expectation, of behavioral integrity seems more intense here than at other academic institutions. It feels heartfelt.

OTHER CAMPUSES

The Northern Lebanon Campus (NLC)

The Northern Lebanon Campus of Notre Dame University, located in Basra, near Tripoli, includes a single large building on land suitable for expansion. Approximately 615 students enrolled at the campus in 2012-2013, in six faculties. The campus employs 12 full-time faculty and approximately 45 part-time faculty. The top administrative team includes a director who is a member of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary and an assistant director for academic affairs, who is in addition a teaching faculty member and a faculty coordinator.

Through examination of syllabi and interviews with faculty and staff at NLC, the Visiting Team concluded that the curriculum is very well integrated into that of the main campus in Zouk Mosbeh. "Course Coordinators" at the main campus collaborate with all faculty, across all campuses, who are teaching sections of the same course. They seek to ensure that syllabi are identical or very similar, that exams test students at the same level on all campuses, and that the quality of student teaching and learning remains high. Faculty at NLC reported regular communication with Course Coordinators, participation in workshops created for faculty at all campuses, easy access to department chairs on the main campus, and a sense of inclusion in the work of the university. Some full-time faculty from the main campus teach courses at NLC and some full-time faculty at NLC teach courses on the main campus.

In each of the last three years, the student body at NLC has grown by approximately 20%, after several years of relatively stable enrollments. Faculty and staff attribute the growth to new policies, such as provision of transportation to the campus for students, and a new infusion of "family spirit." A relatively young faculty and staff reported a strong commitment to the success of NLC and its students. They also expressed a strong vision of NLC as a source of opportunity for students to gain an exceptional education. Faculty exhibited a willingness and desire to volunteer for extra class sessions, to meet with students struggling with personal problems, and to insist on high standards of learning in their courses. Students have responded with praise for faculty, for administrators, and for their education.

The single building at NLC is a large, functional but attractive cement structure which houses nearly all the space currently needed by the branch campus, including full and part-time faculty offices, administrative offices, a student cafeteria, classrooms, labs, and a large atrium for ceremonies, informal gatherings, and casual student talk between classes. The setting is beautiful, with views from the building overlooking Tripoli and the Mediterranean Sea. The building appears to be well-maintained. Faculty demonstrated new equipment purchased for engineering, computer science, and physics labs; the increase in students has required increasing the number and variety of courses. Senior engineering students are provided bus

service to the main campus on weekends to complete labs for which NLC does not yet have the appropriate equipment. The administration and faculty indicated that they hope to purchase the equipment for several new labs in the future as enrollments continue to increase. The university has plans for expansion of the campus to include additional buildings and sports spaces on the land already part of NLC; there are no official plans or timeline for such an expansion.

Challenges for NLC include sustaining the rate of enrollment growth to fund the expansion of labs and new buildings, adding faculty to improve the number of courses taught by full-time faculty, and hiring sufficient faculty and staff to meet the needs of the growing number of students. Administrators reported the difficulty of hiring faculty for the courses most in demand, such as business and engineering, given both NLC's location and salary scale. Most full-time faculty expressed a sense of excitement and promise about NLC's future, but also indicated they did not think the current combination of intense teaching and advising, research, and significant service to the university is sustainable.

Shouf Campus

The Shouf Campus, located to the south of Beirut in Deir el-Kamar, currently enrolls some 320 students, the majority of whom are full-time students. This off-site campus, founded in 2001, has a larger population of Druze and Muslim students, with a much smaller population of Christians. The six Faculties (academic majors) consist of Architecture, Art and Design; Business Administration and Architecture; Engineering; Humanities; Natural and Applied Sciences; and Nursing and Health Sciences.

Ten full-time NDU faculty are assigned to the Shouf campus, with 45 other part-time faculty teaching the various undergraduate courses. Similar to NLC, the curriculum is very well integrated with that of the main campus. The faculty report significant involvement and participation with their peers on the main campus. Syllabi are identical or very similar, exams test students at the same level on all campuses, and the quality of student teaching and learning remains high.

Like NLC, students in the Engineering and Architecture programs are occasionally bused to the main campus on Fridays or Saturdays to supplement educational experiences that cannot currently be provided on the branch campus, mostly those lessons that require certain machinery or technology. Students are made aware of this in advance and enroll fully cognizant of this requirement.

The director and assistant director maintain close contact with the home campus, and the faculty and staff report that they receive the necessary support to provide an education comparable to that at the main campus. As the institution continues to explore ways of increasing the participation of faculty and staff in the governance of the institution, the communication between all constituencies at the branch and main campus should be further strengthened.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution has been remarkably effective and stable in the midst of a complex political context. It is a dynamic organization, characterized in recent years by growth of enrollment, programs, and academic quality, and professionalization of its operations, procedures, and policies. The institution has a clear and observable mission to knit together a factionalized Lebanese society by educating the young together in one institution and providing them a more hopeful and productive future. The students speak well of their academic programs and faculty. The university is effectively raising its profile and is already taking its place among Lebanon's leading institutions of higher learning. The university must continue along its present trajectory of changing its internal culture from one dominated by presidential leadership to one characterized by a strong president working in a shared governance relationship with the faculty and staff. The board and sponsoring religious congregation must continue forward on their own trajectory toward fully empowering the board's responsibility and activity for the university's success. The institution appears to have had many years of strong bottom-line performance, but it is undertaking simultaneous goals that will stretch the organization more than in the past. There is ample evidence of planning activity throughout the organization—and a great deal of change resulting from it—but little evidence of activity to systematically collect, evaluate, and use data for that purpose.

AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE



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ZOUK MOSBEH, LEBANON
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May 20, 2013
Ref: Pr.O/026/Sp13

Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, CM
Office of the President
DePaul University
1 East Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 362-8890
president@depaul.edu

Dear Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider,

We have filled out the Affirmation of Compliance with Federal Regulations Relating to Title IV in as much as it fits the Lebanese higher educational context. For instance, on the Credit Hour Policy, all credits for degree programs at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) are in full compliance with the Higher Education Law in Lebanon and Ministerial regulations set out by the Ministry of Education and Higher education (MEHE). Regarding Student Complaints, procedures for student appeals and complaints are published in the Student Handbook and electronically on the Website as articulated in the self-study. Further, the section on Distance and Correspondence Education does not apply to NDU as we are a face-to-face teaching institution with residency requirements. Finally, we added the URL for the Public Notification which we had posted on our Website during the Commission's comprehensive visit of April 14-17, 2013.

Please feel free to contact me if there is anything you need me to clarify.

Regards,


Fr. Walid Moussa
President



cc: Dr. Paula A. Harbecke, Associate Director



**NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

209 Burlington Road, Bedford, MA 01730
Voice: (781) 271-0022 Fax: (781) 271-0950 Web: <http://cihe.neasc.org>

AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS RELATING TO TITLE IV

Periodically, member institutions are asked to affirm their compliance with federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

- 1. Credit Hour:** Federal regulation defines a credit hour as an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence that reasonably approximates not less than: (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours. (CIHE Policy 111. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.34.)

URL	www.ndu.edu.lb/administration/registrar/2012-2013.pdf
Print Publications	Catalog 2012-2013

- 2. Credit Transfer Policies.** The institution's policy on transfer of credit is publicly disclosed through its website and other relevant publications. The institution includes a statement of its criteria for transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education along with a list of institutions with which it has articulation agreements. (CIHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.44 and 10.5.)

URL	www.ndu.edu.lb/administration/registrar/2012-2013.pdf
Print Publications	Catalog 2012-2013

- 3. Student Complaints.** "Policies on student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered." (*Standards for Accreditation* 6.18, 10.5, and 11.8.)

URL	http://www.ndu.edu.lb/administration/sao/undergraduate_rule.htm
Print Publications	Student Handbook, Course Syllabi, Catalog 2012-2013

- 4. Distance and Correspondence Education: Verification of Student Identity:** If the institution offers distance education or correspondence education, it has processes in place to establish that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit. . . .The institution protects student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity. (CIHE Policy 95. See also *Standards for Accreditation* 4.42.)

Method(s) used for verification	Not Applicable
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- 5. FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS ONLY: Public Notification of an Evaluation Visit and Opportunity for Public Comment:** The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to notify the public of an upcoming comprehensive evaluation and to solicit comments. (CIHE Policy 77.)

URL	http://www.ndu.edu.lb/newsandevents/current/NEASC.HTM
Print Publications	

The undersigned affirms that Notre Dame University-Louaize meets the above federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including those enumerated above.

Chief Executive Officer: _____



Date: May 20, 2013

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS AND CONCERNS

Strengths

The faculty and staff love the university and its mission. They appreciate the monks deeply. They believe that the senior administration has their interests at heart. The students seem enthusiastic and committed to their institution and tell us that the quality of teaching is very good. Even when they are critical, they emphasize this love first. Everyone wants to improve the university. To a person, they want to differentiate the university and make it a wonderful institution.

The institution is well served by its president who is broadly respected and liked. They are also well served by the commitment and personal service of the monks of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, the sponsoring society of the institution. The Order has generously permitted the bulk of their land to be used for the university's purposes and growth. They have retained personal financial responsibility for the university, even as it has grown to substantial size. They have assigned competent members of the order to work at the institution. Selflessly, they have begun turning over responsibility to an independent board of trustees, a decision that must be challenging for them as the university grows and assumes a more traditional and professional set of governance structures.

There is a great commitment to candor and integrity throughout the institution. This honesty, first with themselves and then with the higher education community represented by NEASC and its visiting team, forms a powerful platform from which to continue their improvement as a university.

The institution has come far in its short history, and has made significant advancement in the few years in which it has been seeking accreditation. There are numerous new academic programs, new hires, new facilities, and new policies and procedures leading to an ever stronger professionalization of its activities. The appearance of the campus in general is impressive. It has done this without incurring any long-term debt and modest short-term debt, leaving it in a relatively strong position to continue forward with its plans. This is an ambitious institution, unafraid to embrace the work necessary to become a great university.

The university has taken accreditation most seriously. It has strategically directed resources to support the institution's growth and development. It has formed numerous committees to rewrite bylaws, policies, and procedures. Even if it cannot fund all of its goals at once, the university is clearly making difficult budgetary choices for projects that have, in its opinion, the largest effect and improvement overall and which will ultimately benefit the most.

Concerns

NEASC Standards. The *Self-Study* admirably identifies the places where it believes current university practice does not yet meet NEASC standards, and it proposes a large number of committees and task forces to be established in the coming years to address each of these. We applaud this attention to the standards and the university's plans to address them, and will not repeat those matters here.

Decision-making. The institution will need to address the classic and to-be-expected challenge of a university that has outgrown some of its management structures. What once served them well as a smaller institution is now beginning to slow down their decision-making and potentially prevent the necessary voices from being considered as good policy is formed and adopted. We frequently heard concerns that committee recommendations, simple or large budget requests, and even major plans are not always addressed in a timely manner or the results communicated back to those who had been involved in their formation. The strategic plan "Redefining Excellence in Higher Education 2012" itself remains unapproved and the faculty, staff, and trustees do not know why or when to expect to hear back. We also heard frequent concerns that long-range planning was not possible because most requests are considered year-to-year, and sometimes too late in the year to be implemented. We believe that the understandable and once useful centralization of decision-making must now be distributed in a manner that is customary for large, complex institutions of higher education and made more transparent, or the university risks losing its momentum and the support of its employees.

Planning. We saw and heard great ambitions for the university, including a new library, new medical school and attendant hospital, a church, and possible improvements to the Shouf and NLC campuses. We heard plans to hire more full-time faculty, library personnel, and others, while keeping the tuition competitively low and providing extensive financial aid. Even the plans to seek specialized accreditation for some of the colleges concern us in this regard, since those standards will clearly require reduced teaching loads and more full-time faculty, and there is not a clear path forward that we observed to fund these ambitions. The university has been able to afford its investments to date by (1) keeping costs low through extremely tight staffing ratios and paying its faculty 10-15 percent under that of its higher-priced higher education sister institutions (LAU and AUB), and its staff sometimes half of the equivalent salary; and (3) staying in an aggressive growth mode so that the incremental income from each new year's class can be applied to new initiatives. The question is how long the institution can continue this rate of growth and keep up with the facility, personnel, and educational quality investments it wants to make. An answer to this question must be sought by creating a multi-year financial model that combines enrollment and revenue projections with facilities and

operational planning. We are impressed that great ideas come to fruition at the institution, but we are concerned whether the underlying model is sustainable, or whether one or more of the great ambitions must be sacrificed in the name of supporting the others (e.g., staffing levels for new facilities). Multi-year financial modeling tied to long and short-term goals will address this.

Attracting American Staffing. The university has not made progress on NEASC's insistence (in its 2010 letter granting Eligibility status) that it hire additional Americans or American-trained faculty and professional staff. This is entirely understandable when the present political instability of the country is taken into account. Yet, it is also clear to us that it is highly unlikely that the institution will make progress on this goal without addressing salary and benefits, clarifying promotion guidelines, and offering longer-term contracts to be competitive.

Financial Management. Even senior-most administrators cannot track their budgets throughout the year. We believe the institution must implement a process whereby managers responsible for units can track spending-to-date and responsibly manage their spending.

Faculty Involvement in Governance. It will be important for the institution to make some of its present ad hoc committees, such as the "faculty concerns committee" permanent, or to otherwise find a permanent manner in which faculty can address and shape the policies which govern their involvement in the university. It will also be important for the university to clarify its policies relative to tenure and promotion. There is great confusion throughout the organization on these matters. We suspect that the perceived lack of consistency stemming from short-term contracts limits the faculty's ability to effectively assert its opinions on university decisions.

Research goals. The university reports an intent to increase faculty research productivity, but does not have any attendant plans that we observed to reduce either the teaching workload or the significant service component that is part of NDU faculty life in order to incorporate this new set of goals. To accomplish its goal, the university will also have to clarify and/or establish policies that make sabbatical leaves predictable and possible, and otherwise provide the physical, technological and administrative resources available to support these activities.

Board Governance. The university's Constitutions and Bylaws must be appropriately adopted and must clearly indicate that the board of trustees has "sufficient organizational and operational independence to be held accountable for meeting the Commission's standards."