



University of the West

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Special Visit Report for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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Introduction

Executive Summary

Since University of the West (UWest) first sought accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the University has looked upon this process as an opportunity to reflect and grow. These cycles of evaluation provide considerable insights into UWest’s strengths and weaknesses, both by inspiring UWest to engage in internal assessment and by providing the wise eyes of WASC’s trained evaluators. The University values these opportunities.

Following the 2005 Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) Visiting Team and 2006 WASC Action Letter granting the University initial accreditation, UWest formulated three development themes for the 2008 Institutional Proposal. These themes were:

- Theme I: Development and implementation of a comprehensive student enrollment and retention plan;
- Theme II: Improvement of assessment of student learning to ensure educational effectiveness at course, program and institutional levels; and
- Theme III: Defining and adopting a “Teacher-Scholar-Service Leader” model to improve faculty performance in instruction, assessment, research, mentorship and service.

These three themes were subsequently addressed in the 2010 Capacity and Preparatory Review Report submitted to WASC in September 2010 (hereafter referred to as the “[UWest CPR Report](#)”).

The WASC Visiting Team came to campus December 1-3, 2010. After the Team tendered its report (hereafter referred to as the “WASC CPR Report”), the University [responded](#) with reflection and gratitude. To supplement the Visiting Team Report, WASC suggested seven Action Items in a letter dated March 11, 2011, (hereafter referred to as the “[Action Letter](#)”). This Special Visit Report summarizes what UWest has done to address the Action Items, create this document, and receive the WASC Special Visit Team from October 15 to 17, 2012.

The Seven Action Items:

- Action Item 1: Mission
- Action Item 2: Board of Trustees
- Action Item 3: Leadership
- Action Item 4: Resources
- Action Item 5: Academics
- Action Item 6: Faculty
- Action Item 7: Assessment

The WASC CPR Report was structured around the three themes listed above. However, the Action Letter was divided into seven Action Items. Four of those, Action Items 4 through 7, significantly overlapped with the three themes, but three were fundamentally different – and perhaps even more critical. Action Items 1 through 3 highlight issues which, though not unknown to UWest, were not included in the earlier reports’ three themes. This Special Visit Report is organized around the seven Action Items, on which UWest has made significant progress in the past eighteen months.

As part of its Strategic Plan, UWest has formulated four strategic priorities to guide its growth over the next five years: 1) Increase Enrollments, 2) Improve Communication, 3) Grow Academically, and 4) Grow Financially. These four strategic priorities are explained in greater detail in the [Action Report to the Board of Trustees](#) of June 1, 2012. Although distinct from the three themes and seven Action Items, the four priorities represent a synthesis of their ideas, restructured for measurability and accountability. They have been arrived at through an organically initiated *student-centered, mission-driven decision making framework based on data, research, and inclusion of multiple stakeholders*. These priorities, and their associated strategies and goals, are the culmination of a nine-month strategic planning process involving the entire UWest community, including administration, faculty, staff, and students.

UWest has benefited significantly from the evaluations, observations, and suggestions offered by the WASC Visiting Team and WASC officials. Likewise, new perspectives and insights gained from internal analyses of

institutional challenges have allowed UWest to create ways in which deficiencies can be overcome, challenges met, and strengths further expanded.

Institutional Context

University of the West is a private, nonprofit, non-sectarian, co-educational university offering undergraduate, graduate, certificate, and continuing education programs consistent with the educational mission of California higher education degree-granting institutions. Since February 16, 2006, it is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Organized under the Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law of the State of California, UWest is not conducted for the private gain of any individual or institution.

Mission

University of the West's mission is to provide a whole-person education in a context informed by Buddhist wisdom and values and to facilitate cultural understanding and appreciation between East and West.

Vision for 2017

University of the West will become a recognizable and significant force for promoting interdependence locally and globally, and for transforming its students into knowledgeable, responsible, compassionate, and productive members of society.

Values

Peace: UWest works to resolve conflicts through peaceful means eschewing violence, killing, damage to ourselves, others, the community, or the environment. Peace is not only the absence of violence, but an active state of goodwill or loving-kindness toward those with whom we disagree.

Harmony: UWest values the proactive dimension of peace, namely harmony. The practice of harmony within the individual, community, and natural environment encourages cooperation, sharing, generosity, caring, open-mindedness, respect, and seeking the collective good.

Responsibility: UWest endeavors to create in all members of its community a keen awareness of the consequences of individual decisions and actions, consequences for ourselves, others, the larger community, and the environment. Constructive responsiveness to inequities and disharmonies in personal and social relationships is the concomitant of accepting responsibility.

Compassion: UWest posits that compassion, enacted by serving others through guidance, aid, and solace is a central value undergirding all of UWest's efforts in the academic, social, and professional realms.

Excellence: UWest strives to impart a commitment to excellence in all members of its community: students, alumni, staff, faculty, and administration. Excellence relates to both the search for knowledge and the acts of applying knowledge in the world of work and service.

Brand

University of the West is a globally-oriented higher education institution that offers affordable, accessible, and accredited programs in a supportive, small community setting.

History

University of the West was incorporated as Hsi Lai University in 1990 by [Venerable Master Hsing Yun](#). It is a pioneering effort among Chinese and American Buddhists to establish a Buddhist-affiliated university dedicated to providing a quality education based on American standards and traditions and to fostering mutual recognition and respect among diverse religious systems and cultures. UWest opened in the spring semester of 1991 in facilities at Hsi Lai Temple and remained there through the spring semester of 1996. In the summer of 1996 the University moved to the City of Rosemead, where it has become an independent institution of higher learning

based on the model of a United States university, dedicated to academic excellence in an ambience of academic freedom and objective advancement and dissemination of knowledge.

Hsi (West) Lai (to come), the name of the temple in Hacienda Heights, CA and the original name of the University, is a designation for the transmission of Buddhist teaching (“Buddhadharma”) to the West. In response to the wishes of its stakeholders, the current name, University of the West, was adopted in April 2004. For the past several decades, the western world has witnessed a strong interest in Buddhism. The University has responded to this interest by providing advanced education in Buddhist thought and practice and by preparing Buddhists for leadership in the West. Along with its educational degrees, the [Institute of Chinese Buddhist Studies \(ICBS\)](#), the [Center for the Study of Minority and Small Business \(CSMSB\)](#), and the [Digital Sanskrit Buddhist Canon Project \(DSBC\)](#) have been established to further this mission.

Location

UWest is situated on an attractive and peaceful hillside campus with seven spacious buildings that have been fully remodeled to accommodate the needs of the University, students, and wider community that it serves. The campus includes buildings for education and administration, a large auditorium, two residence halls, a dining hall, and recreation space. It is located in suburban Los Angeles County, in the City of Rosemead. Its neighbors include residential areas, a golf course, parks, retail developments, and several corporate campuses.

Programs

UWest currently offers the academic programs listed below. We are proud to report significantly improved enrollments in all programs, with a total headcount of 306. The numbers shown below are tentative (as of August 29, 2012) and will be finalized in the coming weeks, but are not expected to change significantly.

Program	Enrollment¹
Bachelor’s Programs	
B.A. Business	40
B.A. English	2 ²
B.A. General Studies	9
B.A. Psychology	20
Master’s Programs	
Executive Master of Business Administration	4
Master of Business Administration	54
M.A. Psychology	22
M.A. Religious Studies	22
Master of Divinity	28
Doctoral Programs	
Ph.D. Religious Studies	46

Major Changes since the 2010 WASC Visit

Program Changes

UWest has revived the English B.A. program as of Fall 2011 due to student demand and market interest. Michael Grosso has been hired as Program Coordinator. He has worked diligently to bring this program back to life with the creation of new concentrations and to infuse the mission of the University into its offerings. See Section 5: Academics for more information.

¹ This table does not include non-degree-seeking and exchange students.

² Note that enrollments in B.A. English classes are higher than reflected in the table as the program attracts many exchange students majoring in English from UWest’s partner schools in Asia, who come to UWest for one or two semesters. These students must pass English language proficiency tests in order to attend B.A. English courses.

The Buddhist Chaplaincy program has been separated into an independent department as of Summer 2012. It is no longer a sub-program of the Department of Religious Studies. This was largely an administrative move to provide better decision-making processes and oversight to the funding and staffing of that department and did not involve any significant changes in the academic program itself.

Changes have been made to the General Education program for mission alignment. First, the General Education Coordinator position has been upgraded to a full-time position. A new service learning component and wellness classes have been added to address the need for whole-person education. For more information on these and other changes to GE, see Action Item 7: Assessment.

Personnel Changes

Most of the personnel changes at UWest since December 2010 have been due to hiring and growth. A few are of key importance to the University and WASC. First is the expansion of the Board of Trustees (See Action Item 3: Board of Trustees) from nine members to fifteen. Second, Mr. Jeffrey Lin, Director of General Services was appointed as Chief Financial Officer (See Action Item 2: Leadership), eliminating the overlap of that position with the presidency. Subsequently, UWest has recognized a need for additional administrative staff and has split this role into two positions: CFO and COO, or Chief Operational Officer. Mr. Lin will become COO and UWest is conducting a job search for a CFO. Third, the position of Dean of Student Affairs and that of Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) underwent a number of unforeseen changes.

Heemanshu Bhagat, Dean of Enrollment and Student Affairs at the time of the CPR visit, was released from his contract in June of 2011. Dr. Kenneth Locke, formerly Chair of Religious Studies, was appointed to the post of Dean of Administration, whose responsibilities included Student Affairs. Dr. Locke remained ALO during that time. Sadly for the UWest community, Dr. Locke fell ill in January 2012 and passed away in April. Vanessa Karam, General Education Coordinator, was named ALO in January 2012 due to Dr. Locke's illness. She continues in that position. Dr. Arthur Peterson, Special Advisor to President Wu and himself past President of the Thunderbird School of Global Management, accepted the post of Dean of Student Affairs after Dean Locke's death. Dr. Peterson brings with him outstanding credentials, a wealth of experience, and a lively personality, which have been invaluable to UWest as the institution learns, grows, and recovers from its loss. Dr. Peterson will gladly serve UWest in this position until a long-term Dean of Student Affairs can be hired, at which time he will once again act as a Special Advisor.

UWest has hired the following individuals for key new positions since December 2010:

- [Michael Grosso](#), English B.A. Program Coordinator
- [Glenn Dunki-Jacobs](#), Extended Education Coordinator
- [Dr. Chi Sheh](#), Business Program Faculty (full-time)
- [Meskerem Tadesse](#), Business Program Faculty (full-time)
- [Dr. Hiroshi Sasaki](#), Psychology Program Faculty (full-time)
- [Rev. Victor Gabriel](#), Divinity Program Faculty (full-time)
- [Dr. Miroj Shakya](#), Religious Studies Assistant Chair (full-time)

The following existing key positions have changed staff since December 2010:

- [Dr. Jane Iwamura](#) replaces Dr. Kenneth Locke as Chair of the Department of Religious Studies.
- [Michael Oertel](#) replaces Pranay Bhatla as Institutional Research and Assessment Officer.
- [Jeanette Anderson](#) replaces Carmela Chaney as Registrar.

Moreover, the position of General Education Coordinator, held by [Vanessa Karam](#), was elevated to a full-time position in January 2011, showing the importance the University places on this essential program.

At the time of the writing of this report, the University is conducting job searches for a new [CFO](#), [Dean of Student Affairs](#), Director of Student Life, and is completing the search for a new Wellness Center Coordinator.

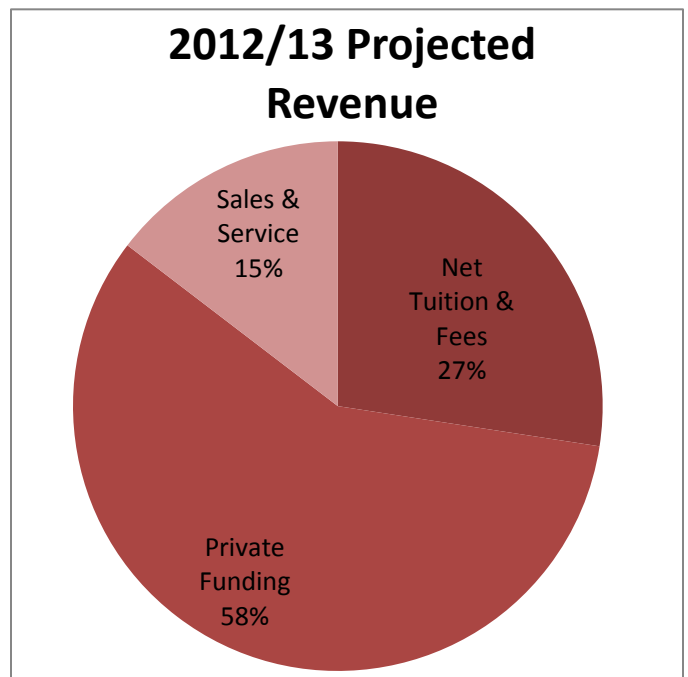
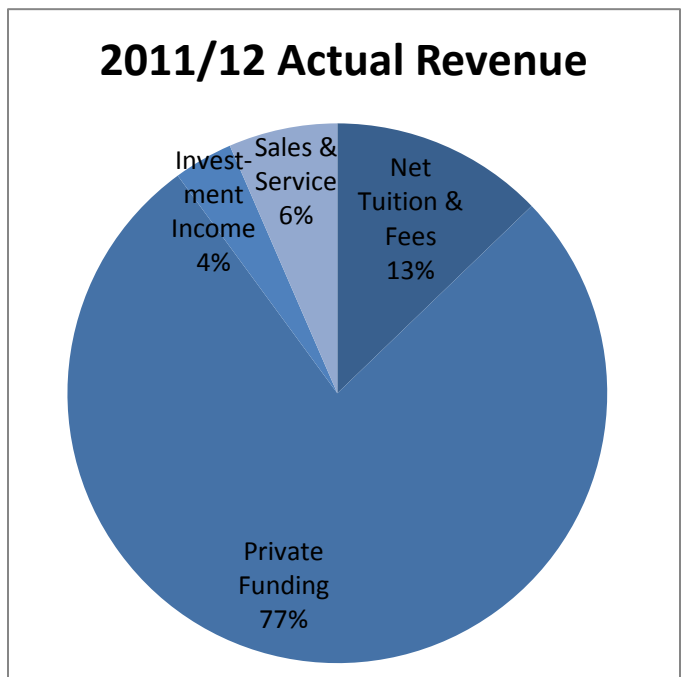
Policy & Procedural Changes

The following are key improvements to policies and procedures implemented since December 2010:

- Adoption of [Major Decision Processes Policy](#), [Strategic Priorities](#), a comprehensive [Enrollment Management Plan](#), and [Academic Plan](#). (See Action Item 3: Leadership and Action Item 4: Resources)
- Implementation of all-staff retreats and information sharing sessions. (See Action Item 3: Leadership)
- More support and financial autonomy for student government and clubs. (See Action Item 4: Resources)
- Implementation of the [Student Early Alert System](#) (SEAS). (See Action Item 5: Academics)
- Creation of a [Faculty Development website](#) and new funding for faculty research. (See Action Item 6: Faculty)
- Creation and implementation of comprehensive Institutional, Program, Course, and Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes using the TaskStream assessment system software. (See Action Item 7: Assessment)
- Student Government representatives are included on all University committees except the Executive Cabinet.

Financial Changes

As in prior years, UWest expects to receive the majority of its revenue, 58%, from private funding. Most of these funds will come through Fo Guang Shan and their affiliated and subsidiary organizations, such as the International Buddhist Progress Society (IBPS) and Buddha’s Light International Association (BLIA), as well as individual temples, chapters, and persons. Despite this heavy reliance on donor funding, private contributions are projected to make up a smaller proportion of UWest’s revenue in 2012/13 than in past years. This is not due to any lack of commitment on behalf of UWest’s donors, but rather a reflection of their unprecedented generosity in 2010/11 and 2011/12, which generated record donations (over \$15 million raised) to UWest’s operating budget and endowment. The final financial statements for 2012/13 may ultimately demonstrate similar generosity, but the initial 2012/13 budget makes a far more conservative private revenue estimate of \$3.4 million, which is more than enough to balance UWest’s budgets, keep UWest debt-free, and allow for generous investments in key areas such as teaching, research, and student services. (See Section 4: Resources for more information.)



Report Preparation

Key Personnel

UWest immediately involved all constituencies in reading, understanding, and acting on the WASC CPR Report following its receipt in January 2011. Following the March 2011 Action Letter, UWest designated several individuals and groups, foremost the WASC Core Group, to help address the Action Items and prepare for the upcoming Special Visit. From this time until January 2011, [Dr. Kenneth Locke](#) worked tirelessly as Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) to ensure the entire UWest community understood WASC's advice and the responsible constituents carried out their designated tasks. Following Dr. Locke's hospitalization, [Vanessa Karam](#), General Education Coordinator, took over the responsibilities of ALO. To ensure the timely completion of the report, a dedicated Accreditation Assistant, [Monica Sanford](#), was hired and Dr. Stephen Morgan, President Emeritus of the University of La Verne, was brought in as an external consultant to the Special Visit Report preparations. Ms. Karam and Ms. Sanford have been dedicated to accreditation issues for the past several months, which largely includes facilitating communication between departments and collecting data and evidence for this Special Visit Report to document UWest's progress.

Other major contributors to the Special Visit Report include [Dr. C.S. Wu](#), President; [Dr. William Howe](#), Dean of Academic Affairs; [Dr. Arthur Peterson](#), Dean of Student Affairs; [Jeffrey Lin](#), Chief Financial Officer; [Dr. Bill Chen](#), Vice Dean of Academic Assessment; and [Michael Oertel](#), Institutional Research and Assessment Officer. Each has chaired committees, set strategic directions, delegated tasks, and written reports from which the accreditation team has drawn to create this document. Effectively, every member of the UWest community has, in some way, contributed to this report by serving on committees, submitting evidence or data, providing feedback, answering surveys, and carrying on with the mission of the University. Department chairs, directors, program coordinators, and student leaders have also been integral to this process.

Key Committees

Each of UWest's committees has been involved in some aspect of the Action Items detailed here:

Committee	Contributed to Action Item:
University Cabinet	All
Executive Cabinet	All
Mission & Identity Committee	1: Mission, 3: Leadership, 5: Academics, 7: Assessment
Academic Policy & Curriculum Committee	5: Academics, 7: Assessment
University-Wide Assessment Committee	7: Assessment
Finance & Budget Committee	3: Leadership, 4: Resources
Enrollment Management Team	4: Resources, 5: Academics
Academic Senate	5: Academics, 6: Faculty, 7: Assessment
UWest Student Government	1: Mission, 4: Resources, 5: Academics, 7: Assessment

UWest's Response to Issues Identified by WASC

The following seven sections of this Special Report respond to each of the seven Action Items and their corollary issues raised in the WASC Action Letter and the WASC CPR Report.

Action Item 1: Mission

WASC’s Concerns

Action Item 1 calls for the clarification of UWest’s mission to ensure that all constituents understand it and that it provides the foundation for institutional planning and decision making. The mission should be well publicized, understood by the community, and stated in relevant materials about the University.

Page 2 of the Action Letter states:

The Commission expressed its support for the mission and, at the same time, urges UWest to clarify and communicate the mission more clearly to the UWest community and the public. The mission should be deeply embedded in the culture and life of the University and guide its decisions and plans.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Page 2
WASC CPR Report	Pages 9, 11, 12, 18-21, 26, 27, 31, 32, 34, and 38
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.1, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, and 4.1

UWest’s Concerns

UWest is a unique institution with a singular mission. Founded by a Buddhist monastic order originating in Taiwan, the University is independently managed by a culturally, linguistically, ethnically and religiously diverse group of administrators³ and [trustees](#), and staffed and attended by a truly amazing diversity of individuals. From its inception, the University has been guided by its mission to provide a whole-person education informed by Buddhist wisdom and values and to facilitate cultural understanding and appreciation between East and West.

UWest’s mission is grounded in [Buddhist wisdom and values](#), and those values encourage diversity and freedom of thought. Religious affiliation is never considered in hiring or admission criteria, and the University is open to people of all religions or none. While curriculum and campus life activities are designed to engage students in questions surrounding issues such as wisdom, compassion, and liberation from suffering, this is done in a wider context than “purely Buddhist” and in a way that speaks to people of other faiths and worldviews. There is no proselytizing at UWest, nor any requirement for religious service. Voluntary religious observances are most often organized by students and are inclusive of the other faiths represented among the student body, staff and faculty. [Academic freedom](#) is given paramount importance and supported by the Board of Trustees as well as University leadership. As a result of these standards, UWest has a diverse community of [faculty](#), staff, and [students](#) of a very wide variety of religious persuasions, ethnicities, nations of origin, and worldviews.

UWest’s Mission

- Provide a whole-person education in the context of Buddhist wisdom and values;
- Facilitate cultural understanding and appreciation between East and West.

UWest has articulated [a vision and a set of values](#), which reflect and enhance the mission, to complement the learning outcomes at the institutional, program, course, and co-curricular level. UWest believes it is critical that the mission be reflected not only in student learning outcomes, but also in the way the University is managed and conducts its business. The second of the four Strategic Priorities, Improve Communication⁴, is strongly related to ensuring the mission can be lived in this way. Good, ongoing, systematic communication within UWest will ensure the mission can be carried out. It is important that faculty and staff at UWest “live the mission” in order to best model and pass on these priorities to students. Living the mission must be carried out in a safe, supportive, and productive environment. The mission isn’t just a static

UWest’s Values

- Peace
- Harmony
- Responsibility
- Compassion
- Excellence

³ Appendix A: Evidence List, 3 – Leadership, Administrators Resumes

⁴ Appendix A: Evidence List, 4 – Resources, “Action Report to Board of Trustees June 2012”

statement that all UWest community members know; ideally, it is a dynamic commitment that everyone can implement in their daily work and life.

Implemented Actions

UWest's mission has been embedded in the culture of the University since its founding. However, over time, it has become necessary to formalize the school's mission, values, and identity in order to consistently communicate them so that they can be fully understood and applied in all aspects of campus life. Therefore, UWest has worked diligently to make the implicit understanding of mission and identity held by the founders of the University into something explicit, well-articulated, regularly communicated, and fully actualized.

Mission and Identity Committee

In December of 2010, following the WASC team's visit, UWest conducted a [Mission and Identity Survey](#) to determine what faculty, staff, and students knew about UWest's mission and how they perceived UWest's identity. The results were presented to the administration, who, just prior to the receipt of the March 7 dated Action Letter, decided to form a group to look into these matters and address the related concerns raised in the WASC CPR Report. This new committee is the Mission and Identity Committee.

The Mission and Identity Committee (MIC) met for the first time on March 9, 2011, and has held weekly or bi-weekly meetings ever since⁵. The MIC includes administrators, faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds. The goal of the MIC was and is to clarify and articulate UWest's mission and identity both internally and externally. In brief, the Committee has integrated its findings and recommendations into the institutional vision and values, strategic priorities, communications initiatives, budgeting process, academic and co-curricular activities, and assessment of programs.

The MIC furthermore tackled a persistent issue at UWest: systemic communication problems. Based on survey results and anecdotal evidence, the MIC recognized poor communication as one of the greatest barriers UWest faced in creating a unified identity and "living the mission." The MIC submitted a [Communication Report](#) to the President's Cabinet on April 18, 2012. The report contained a number of concrete suggestions to improve communication at UWest and was soundly endorsed by the Executive Cabinet. This report included an elucidation of the problems UWest faces with communication, a call to work together towards a system-side solution, and concrete action steps to be implemented. These action steps include recommendations for improved shared governance, greater transparency, enhanced communication, better accountability and consistency in decision-making, community building, and executive support for UWest's leadership team. Many recommendations have already been implemented, per the [June 2012 update report](#), and more are in long-term planning stages. Improving Communication was also the second of the four Strategic Priorities adopted by UWest in June 2012 and will be continuously monitored both by the MIC and the Executive Cabinet.

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes

In the [2010 UWest CPR Report](#), UWest identified the need to refine student learning outcomes to "better dovetail with the mission". New Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) had been implemented at the time of that report, but had not yet been fully evaluated. By the time of the WASC CPR Visit, UWest had collected evidence on the effectiveness of the SLOs and determined they did not sufficiently reflect the University's mission. These suspicions were confirmed by the WASC Visiting Team, which helped galvanize further action to articulate and understand the mission and identity of UWest. These combined efforts led to the development of a comprehensive set of integrated, mission-driven learning outcomes.

The MIC's first order of business was to review the [Mission and Identity Survey results](#), a [2010 white paper](#) rearticulating the mission, and documents and correspondence that were exchanged when the mission was first created. The committee also held a [faculty and staff workshop in May 2011](#) to explore the themes of mission, identity, and student outcomes. In addition, the committee continuously consulted appropriate faculty and staff

⁵ WASC Evidence/1- Mission/MIC Minutes

with institutional memory. At the same time, the committee looked outward at small universities with comparable missions, e.g. the University of San Diego, to learn how these schools were articulating their missions and incorporating them into their learning outcomes. In order to further clarify the mission, the MIC developed an [explanatory statement](#) and [Institutional Learning Outcomes](#) (ILOs and [ILO rubrics](#)), which were approved by the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committees (APCC)⁶, Academic Senate, University Cabinet, and ultimately endorsed by the Board of Trustees at their [October 2011 meeting](#).

Following approval of the ILOs, the MIC broke into subcommittees to assist each academic program with the creation of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and assessment rubrics⁷. MIC members sat on PLO subcommittees to assist department chairs and faculty in aligning PLOs with UWest's ILOs and Mission, and worked with the University-Wide Assessment Committee (UWAC) to ensure that outcomes were measurable and evidence-based. PLOs were approved by APCC for each academic department in Fall 2011, and the respective programs immediately began putting them into effect. The MIC collaborated with the Institutional Research & Assessment Office to develop workshops and materials to help faculty create Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and CLO rubrics⁸ aligned with their department's PLOs, UWest's ILOs, and, ultimately, the mission of the University (see this [visualization](#) of the connection between mission and outcomes). A test round of CLO assessment via the TaskStream system (one course per full-time faculty) was conducted in Spring 2012 (see Action Item 7: Assessment). The MIC reviewed the [first report of ILO results](#) from this test phase in Summer 2012. Beginning Fall 2012, all degree-level courses are required to implement CLO assessment (see Action Item 7: Assessment).

Co-Curricular Learning

Since early 2011, the Office of Student Life has been active in integrating mission into its programs and activities. One example is the [Express Yourself](#) writing contest launched in Fall 2011. This mission-centered contest encouraged international students to think about what they had learned about Western/American culture/s while at UWest, and invited domestic students to reflect on what they had learned about Buddhist culture/s and practices. Submissions were reviewed by panels of judges from among faculty and staff, and prizes were awarded for the [best international](#) and [best domestic](#) submissions. A similar contest is planned for Fall 2012 and subsequent years.

In Spring 2012, the Co-Curricular Task Force was created as a break-out group from the MIC. This small working-group was dedicated to creating for UWest's co-curricular programs measurable learning outcomes that align with the ILOs and are [assessable](#) via the TaskStream system. This task force developed the [UWest Co-Curricular Program Learning Outcomes \(CCPLOs\)](#), which were vetted by qualified administrators and faculty and then endorsed by major University constituencies (Cabinet, APCC, UWAC, Student Government).

A number of MIC members also served concurrently on the Strategic Planning Committee starting in September 2011, to ensure UWest's Vision and Values, as articulated in the [Strategic Plan Draft](#), aligned with the Mission and ILOs. The MIC also created a document called "[Living the Mission: A Decision-Making Guide](#)" to help faculty and staff understand how to integrate the mission and values of UWest into their daily work and during strategic decision-making.

Publicizing the Mission

The UWest Mission, ILOs, and PLOs are published in the [University Catalogue](#). The MIC has also worked with the University's graphics designer to create Mission, Values, and ILO posters to be located throughout the school, including in large public spaces, classrooms and conference rooms. These posters will be visible throughout the campus from September 2012 (examples: [Compassion](#), [Peace](#)).

⁶ WASC Evidence/5–Academics/APCC Meeting Minutes

⁷ WASC Evidence/5 –Academics/Program Learning Outcomes Rubrics

⁸ WASC Evidence/7 –Assessment/Course Learning Outcomes Rubrics

The MIC is also currently collaborating with the [UWest Contemplative Council \(UWCC\)](#) to coordinate a [Values Workshop](#) for all faculty and staff--to be held early in the Fall 2012 semester so that it can include adjunct and new faculty. This mandatory all-day workshop, scheduled for September 21, 2012, is designed to communicate the mission and five UWest values to all employees and engage them in a collaborative process of conversation and reflection on how these values can be enacted in their departments and daily work.

At the time of this report's drafting, the MIC is also cooperating with the Admissions Office, Office of Student Life, UWCC, and Student Government to integrate mission- and values-oriented content into New Student Orientation. Working with Institutional Research, the MIC has created questions for the [New Student Orientation Survey](#) which measure how well the incoming student's goals and values "fit" with the mission and values of UWest. The [Enrollment Management Plan](#) identified this issue as a critical retention factor, which UWest will begin assessing this semester.

Results & Feedback

The MIC has recently worked to evaluate the outcomes of mission-related activities among the UWest community. The committee has reviewed mission-related data gathered from five UWest surveys as well as the first TaskStream-generated report on Institutional Learning Outcomes from the Spring 2012 assessment system test phase. The conclusions from this thorough analysis are outlined below, with the committee's subsequent recommendations in the following section regarding Ongoing and Planned Actions.

Data-Driven Measurement of Mission Effectiveness

The [Mission and Identity Survey](#) was circulated again to faculty, staff, and students in Spring 2012, 18 months after the first circulation. The MIC determined that understanding of the mission statement did not significantly change from 2010 to 2012. However, ***when asked what two things they value most highly, faculty, staff, and students all cited the mission and values of the University above anything else*** in both 2010 and 2012. When asked what UWest should do in the next five years, the top three responses in both surveys were: 1) Increase Enrollment, 2) Strengthen Identity and Mission, and 3) Expand Programs and Courses. Moreover, faculty, staff, and students all recommended that UWest develop a core specialty (e.g. Buddhist studies, contemplative studies, etc.) and become a leader in that field. These recommendations were strongly tied to recommendations to strengthen mission and identity.

A review of [survey data available](#) from the Institutional Research and Assessment Office (IRAO) revealed other surveys with mission-related questions, including [course evaluations](#), of which UWest has collected over 1,600 in the past four semesters alone (excluding Summer). While an analysis of course evaluations did indicate a link between practice of the mission and a likelihood of a student appreciating a course or instructor, mission-related factors appear no more influential on students' appreciation of the class than other factors in general. ***Instructors who receive high marks in mission-related questions are highly likely to receive high marks in all areas and vice versa.***

Mission-related questions on the Graduate Survey and Alumni Survey, both administered for the first time in 2012, were more revealing. The [Graduate Survey](#) showed that UWest graduates perceive themselves as possessing character traits in keeping with the mission and ILOs. Moreover, ***85.7% of respondents felt they received a whole-person education and 92.9% felt they learned about Eastern and Western cultures.*** However, the committee determined that graduates were not as active outside the classroom in mission-related activities as UWest's ILOs envision. Only 57.1% of respondents participated in some form of volunteer work and 71.5% participated in University activities (e.g. student clubs) outside of class.

In contrast, alumni had a more mixed opinion of the mission, with 61.9% agreeing that "whole-person education" had shaped their lives and only 59.5% utilizing their understanding of Eastern and Western culture in their personal or professional life. However, the [Alumni Survey](#) demonstrated that ***respondents who felt their personal or professional life had been shaped by the mission of the University were more likely to be satisfied***

with their college experience, recommend UWest to others, and feel connected to the University. Those who did not feel shaped were twice as likely *not* to feel satisfied or connected or to want to recommend UWest.

UWest has begun regularly surveying employees, including mission and communication questions in the 2011 and 2012 [Employee Satisfaction Surveys](#). The MIC evaluated these extensive surveys in order to determine the relationships of mission and communication with overall job satisfaction and an employee's willingness to recommend UWest as a good place to work. The committee determined that while **employees understand, value, and practice the mission in their work**, they tend to have a negative perception of leadership's ability to enact the mission. Connected to that is the result showing that employees have a poor perception of communication at UWest. Employees want better communication and report higher satisfaction with their supervisors, departments, and the University as a whole when they perceive communication is good. Improved communication and the perception that University leadership is "living the mission" make it more likely employees will recommend UWest as a good place to work. (See Action Item 3: Leadership).

In addition to surveys, UWest is assessing the mission using the [Institutional Learning Outcomes](#) and [TaskStream](#) assessment software. The new assessment system completed its first test run in Spring 2012. Even this incomplete run, featuring only eleven courses, revealed a great deal about the [ILOs](#), which are derived directly from the mission. As expected, ILO 1: Wisdom and Skillful Means, is the easiest to assess as it includes the most conventional categories, such as subject knowledge and critical thinking skills. ILO 2: Self-Awareness and ILO 3: Liberation were more difficult to assess, but each academic program included at least some measures of these outcomes. ILO 4: Interdependence was the most difficult to assess, also as expected, with only two courses measuring categories such as cultural appreciation and understanding interdependence. For this reason, the Mission and Identity Committee is working closely with the Co-Curricular Task Force to design co-curricular activities and programs that supplement those ILOs which are more difficult to teach and measure in a classroom environment, but which the University believes are integral to a whole-person education. For now, the MIC is awaiting further assessment of both academic and co-curricular learning outcomes before making detailed recommendations on mission alignment in Spring 2013.

Finally, the University's mission was a topic of discussion at the UWest student government's Fall 2011 student forum. The opinions expressed were provided to the administration, with appropriate recommendations, in the [Fall 2011 Student Forum and Survey Report](#) and a November 2011 [Communications Report](#) submitted directly to the Board of Trustees. Many recommendations, including having more regular surveys of student mission perception, have already been implemented (e.g. Graduate and Alumni Surveys, New Student Orientation Surveys).

Ongoing & Planned Actions

As campus-wide discussion of mission and values has increased over the past two years, improvements in some areas have been actualized faster than in others. It is likely that some negative assessments are related to ingrained perceptions that take longer to change. Nevertheless, UWest's leadership is committed to embracing changes in communication and operations that concord with the UWest mission. The MIC will continue to work with the administration to appropriately revise policies and practices, particularly to improve communication and evaluate these survey results again next year.

The MIC will remain a permanent committee and has planned valuable future work. For the past 18 months, the committee has met weekly or bi-weekly and anticipates continuing this intense meeting schedule into Fall 2012 semester. During this period the committee will, among other activities (see [full list](#)):

- Redesign the Mission and Identity Survey to solicit more specific and quantitative data, in addition to its current qualitative questions
- Conduct the first full analysis of the mission and ILOs based on comprehensive data from the new assessment system in Spring 2013
- Cooperate with Marketing and Enrollment to ensure all marketing materials, including the website, catalog, and brochures, accurately reflect the mission and identity of the University

- Cooperate with the Co-Curricular Task Force to design co-curricular programs and activities that align with the mission and ILOs and can be regularly assessed using PLOs, rubrics, and TaskStream software
- Ensure an exchange of new MIC members for “retiring” members to provide for the inclusion of fresh and diverse perspectives

Following the conclusion of this period of intense work, sometime in Spring 2013, the committee will move to a monthly meeting schedule. By this time the systems will be in place to regularly communicate the mission in a clear and unified way and regularly assess understanding of the mission among all members of the campus community. Hereafter, the committee plans to, among other things (see [full list](#)):

- Communicate the mission, values, and identity of the University to all faculty and staff on a semiannual or annual basis through regular workshops and to all students through New Student Orientation, marketing materials, and program alignment
- Conduct an annual analysis of the mission and ILOs based on comprehensive assessment data from both academic and co-curricular programs (via TaskStream assessment software reports)
- Conduct continuous process improvement based on assessment feedback to ensure the mission, vision, values, learning outcomes, and identity of UWest remain a vital, life-giving force

Action Item 2: Board of Trustees

WASC's Concerns

Action Item 2 concerns the governing board, including its relation to the sponsoring order, its authority, the frequency and venue of its meetings, and its size and expertise. UWest should carry out its planned expansion of the governing board in a timely fashion and include among its new members persons with expertise in American higher education, including finances, academic affairs, and planning. A roster of the board, board member biographies, board minutes, and a schedule of planned meetings should be provided to document these changes. The procedures, tools, and timeline for evaluation of the president should also be available.

Page 2 of the Action Letter states:

WASC expects boards to be independent, to have authority to exercise oversight over institutional integrity, policies, and operations, and to evaluate the president. Among the team findings that led to this concern are the fact that the board meets only twice a year and that its meetings are not often held at the University's campus or even in the region. ...In addition, the Commission recommends that the board consider meeting more frequently, and convening more of its meetings at the University to provide an opportunity for engagement with faculty, students and staff. Further, in order to demonstrate the independence of the board, UWest should clarify the relationship between the University and its sponsoring entity, the Fo Guang Shan order.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Pages 1-2
WASC CPR Report	Pages 17-19, 30, 34, and 35
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.6, 3.8, and 3.9

UWest's Concerns

UWest's governing board, the Board of Trustees (BOT), has functioned as an independent governing authority that oversees institutional integrity, policies, and ongoing operations. UWest's affiliation to the Buddhist religious order Fo Guang Shan does not interfere with UWest's functioning as a free and independent American university. Education is clearly UWest's primary purpose, and there is no history of interference in substantive academic decisions or educational functions by Fo Guang Shan or any other external bodies.

In line with WASC's [Policy on Independent Governing Boards](#), UWest's BOT is committed "to protect the educational institution from undue influence and challenges to its academic integrity" (p. 8). UWest's related entity, Fo Guang Shan, also supports academic freedom. The principle of academic freedom and freedom of religious conscience are ultimately reflected in the University's mission, which very consciously is worded as "to provide a whole-person education *in a context informed by Buddhist wisdom and values*" and not "to provide a *Buddhist education*." The difference is essential and is recognized and supported by all entities.

Nonetheless, as UWest has grown, it has become clear that the responsibilities and workload of the Board of Trustees have also grown and that more expertise in American higher education is necessary to guide UWest into the future. UWest and its BOT wholeheartedly agree with WASC's recommendations that the Board must expand and meet more frequently. The University feels these concerns have been largely addressed by the actions described below.

Implemented Actions

WASC's recommendations concerning UWest's governing board, the Board of Trustees (BOT), have been especially useful to the improvement of the governing structure and the advancement of the UWest mission. These recommendations have been fully embraced by the University leadership, the University's sponsors, and the UWest faculty, students and staff.

Relationship with the Sponsoring Order

This Action Item is also concerned with the University's relationship to Fo Guang Shan, the order of humanistic Buddhists who founded the University in 1991 and who continue to offer it strong financial support. This matter is addressed directly in the document on the [UWest-BOT-Religious Order Relationship](#) issued by the Board in response to the WASC CPR Report. This statement clarifies the autonomy of the UWest Board from Fo Guang Shan (or any religious entity) and indicates what it has done to ensure this autonomy, such as greatly increasing the membership of the Board to include a majority of independent Board members overall as well as on the various committees. Moreover, the International Buddhist Progress Society (IBPS), the U.S. headquarters of Fo Guang Shan, has issued a [Related Entities Statement](#) confirming Fo Guang Shan's commitment to WASC standards, including financial sustainability, and affirming that the order provides financial support while the Board of Trustees remains autonomous. According to the University's understanding, this statement is similar to those required by regional accrediting agencies of faith-based institutions such as Southern Methodist University (founded by the United Methodist Church) or the University of Notre Dame (founded by the Roman Catholic Church). It should also be noted that, like Notre Dame, UWest has only one governing board and is thus free of the conflict that some faith-based schools experience, which have one board devoted to religious matters and one responsible for finances and operations, which can at times be in conflict and work at cross purposes.

Academic Freedom

Of equal importance to the insurance of autonomy and academic freedom, however, are the University's academic decision-making structure and hiring and admission policies, all of which preclude any interference from the religious order or any other external entity. At UWest, the faculty control the curriculum. All academic and curriculum decisions are made by the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (APCC), chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs and attended by department chairs, program coordinators, the registrar, the librarian, other relevant staff, and a student representative. The meetings of the APCC are open to all faculty members, both full-time and adjunct.

The University engages in, among other disciplines, the academic study of religion. The Religious Studies Department, UWest's flagship, offers courses and supervises dissertations and theses on a diverse range of Buddhist and other religious beliefs and practices. Open discussion and critique of religion and religious teachings, including those of Buddhism, are encouraged. At the same time, the exploration of values and meaning is part of the curriculum, with religion given a place of importance. Therefore, in Religious Studies courses as well as courses in UWest's other programs, questions of meaning and ethics are openly discussed and often framed in the context of Buddhist wisdom and values. However, the University places no religious requirement on applicants, students, faculty or staff. Compelling evidence of this is that until quite recently, the head of the Religious Studies Department for ten years was an Anglican theologian. Many more examples of key personnel, past and present, who are neither Buddhist nor members of Fo Guang Shan can be cited. What can be observed, however, is that people of faith in general, whether Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, or others, tend to be attracted to UWest as a place of work or study because the University's mission and values resonate with them.

Expansion of the Board of Trustees

Pursuant to the CPR Visit, Team Report and WASC Action Letter, the University and the BOT sprang into action in order to make the recommended changes as quickly as possible. During that process, UWest benefited from the help of Dr. Stephen Morgan, then-President of the University of La Verne, whom WASC hired to consult with UWest on board restructuring. Over the course of the year 2011, Dr. Morgan visited the campus and met with senior administration and the ALO, advising them on how to expand the Board as effectively as possible. Dr. Morgan also favorably reviewed the changes made to the Board membership and structure.

As a result, the Board of Trustees expanded from nine to fifteen members. Only seven months after the Action Letter, the newly constituted Board held its [first official meeting](#) on the UWest campus October 10-11, 2011.

This two-day meeting included a one-day retreat during which the Trustees had the opportunity to get to know each other and become acquainted with the UWest campus and department heads.

Expertise of the Trustees

The new Trustees all reside and work in the United States. They possess a range of professional expertise, including finance and investment, strategic planning, higher education, and legal experience. In choosing new trustees, only their skills, experience, and dedication to the mission of the University were considered, not religious affiliation or tradition. [Full biographies](#) and background information on all the Trustees can be found in Appendix A: Evidence, along with meeting minutes and summaries from the past year⁹.

Frequency and Venue of BOT Meetings

The Board of Trustees has implemented a regular schedule of on-campus meetings every three months, starting with the October 2011 meeting. Those Trustees who cannot attend on-campus meetings have been present via conference call with very few exceptions. The Board has subsequently met in December 2011, March 2012, and June 2012, holding four meetings in the [2011/2012 academic year](#). All of these meetings have been held on the UWest campus. The BOT's first meeting of the [2012/2013 academic year](#) is scheduled in October 2012 and will coincide with the time of the WASC Special Visit. At least one meeting per year includes an added one-day retreat. In addition, various [Board committees](#) meet via conference call between the on-campus meetings.

Board Committees

WASC's [Policy on Independent Governing Boards](#) states that "the Board must demonstrate that it has functioning committees, including at a minimum: audit, academic affairs, finance, membership or nominating or the equivalent" (p. 2). To date, UWest's BOT has fulfilled most of that requirement by establishing the first three as well as a legal and a strategic planning committee:

- Academic Affairs Committee:
Chair: Dr. Lewis Lancaster
Voting Members: Cecil Willis, Jr., Ven. Hsin Ting, Ven. Dr. Yi Kong
Non-Voting Members: Dr. C.S. Wu (President), Dr. William Howe (Dean of Academic Affairs)

- Audit Committee:
Chair: Darlene Lanham
Voting Members: Jonathan Strum, Matthew Stitzer, Henry Chen, Ven. Dr. Yi Kong
Non-Voting Members: Ven. Miao Hsin, Victoria Cheng

Board of Trustees

- Founder: Venerable Master Hsing Yun
- Executives
 - Chair: Ven. Hsin Ting
 - Secretary: Ven. Dr. Yi Kong (Man Tsu Chang)
 - Treasurer: Ven. Abbot Hue Chi (Chi Rung Wang)
- Trustees
 - Henry Chen
 - Pi-Hsia Hsiao
 - Ven. Hui Chuan (Hsi-Shen Fang)
 - Roger Frank
 - Dr. Lewis Lancaster
 - Darlene Lanham
 - Matthew Stitzer
 - Jonathan Strum
 - Ven. Tzu Hui (Yu-Li Chang)
 - Ven. Tzu Jung (Suh-Jen Wu)
 - Cecil Willis, Jr.

⁹ See WASC Evidence/2–Board of Trustees for files containing biographies, meeting minutes, reports, etc.

- Finance (Investment) Committee:
Chair: Roger Frank
Voting Members: Jonathan Strum, Matthew Stitzer, Henry Chen, Ven. Hue Chi, Ven. Dr. Yi Kong
Non-Voting Members: Ven. Miao Hsin, Ven. Miao Hsi, Dr. C.S. Wu (President), J. Lin (CFO)

- Legal Committee:
Chair: Jonathan Strum
Voting Members: Ven. Hue Chi, Matthew Stitzer, Darlene Lanham
Non-Voting Members: Dr. C.S. Wu (President), Jeffrey Lin (CFO)

- Strategic Planning Committee:
Chair: Cecil Willis, Jr.
Voting Members: All Board Members
Non-Voting Members: Dr. C.S. Wu (President), Dr. William Howe (Dean of Academic Affairs), Jeffrey Lin (CFO), Dr. Arthur Peterson (Dean of Student Affairs), Dr. Richard Phan (Senior Advisor to the President and Business Administration Faculty)

The [Academic Affairs Committee](#) has been briefed by Dr. William Howe, Dean of Academic Affairs, on the finalization of tenure policies and the first cycle of tenure review for two faculty members in Religious Studies and one in Psychology. The committee is following with great interest the full implementation of Course Learning Outcomes assessment beginning Fall 2012 and will make recommendations based on reports generated at the program and institutional level. The committee is also active in initiating or supporting outreach efforts that allow UWest to provide service according to its mission and raise the University's visibility (e.g. cooperation with other institutions, prison initiative).

The [Audit Committee](#) has reviewed the 2011/12 fiscal year audit report, which was an unqualified opinion with some useful recommendations for improvement, and has set a calendar for selection of a new audit firm for 2012/13. On the recommendations of the Audit Committee, the Board has directed staff to implement easing of disbursement protocols so that students, faculty, and staff may now more efficiently access budget-approved funds. This was accomplished through a streamlining of the purchase request procedure so that fewer authorizing signatures were required. Finally, the committee has directed University staff to evaluate the feasibility of a management study to review organizational structure.

The [Finance Committee](#) manages one of the University's endowment accounts, and reviews these investment results quarterly, modifying its strategy according to market conditions. With continued volatile market conditions, the investment strategy has been conservative with an emphasis on fixed-income investments. Members of the Finance Committee communicate in between meetings if market conditions raise concerns.

The [Legal Committee](#) has advised on the revision of the Faculty and Administration Handbooks, which are under ongoing review. In addition, the committee has recently taken an active role in advising the University on revising and making transparent rules and procedures for termination of employees. The committee monitored the recent termination of an employee and reviewed the final agreement between UWest and that employee.

The [Strategic Planning Committee](#) has held extensive conversations concerning the academic aspects as well as the business side of University operations. The committee has endeavored to assist UWest wherever possible on the WASC reaccreditation process, and kept the rest of the Board informed of UWest operations in order to facilitate the incorporation of UWest's strategic priorities into the Board's vision for the University. The committee scheduled and held a Board retreat on June 16, 2012, to further discuss the Board's vision, both in the short and long term. They have also advised on the development of procedures for handling major issues with the University in a timely manner.

The June 15 meeting of the BOT voted to create a [Budget Committee](#), with initial members Darlene Lanham, Jonathan Strum and Henry Chen.

The only WASC-recommended committee that has not yet been formed to date is a membership or nominating committee. As mentioned below, however, now that the BOT is able to review WASC's newly ratified Policy on Independent Governing Boards, this committee should be established within the 2012/2013 academic year.

Board Responsibilities

During the past year, the new Board of Trustees has exercised oversight over UWest operations and advised UWest administration where appropriate on matters of policy, procedure, finance, fundraising, budgets, staffing, legal matters, and special projects¹⁰. The BOT has also met with many department heads, faculty, staff, and student leaders during their various on-campus meetings to gauge the institutional atmosphere. The Trustees have reviewed the performance of the President, Deans, and Chief Financial Officer. The various Board committees have met regularly to carry out their duties and report back to the Board as a whole.

The BOT has also supported the addition of full-time faculty to all academic departments and the approval of a new compensation proposal including [salary increases](#) and tenure track positions for seven existing faculty members (see Action Item 4: Resources for details of the increases)¹¹. The Board has advised on the development of the current fiscal year budget, which was approved at the [June meeting](#), as well as the five-year budget. The Board has consulted with the administration on the overlap of administrative and financial duties, resulting in the creation of a new Chief Operational Officer position and the job search for a separate Chief Financial Officer (see Action Item 3 Leadership). The Trustees have greatly supported UWest's recruitment and marketing efforts, which have resulted in significantly increased enrollments in the Fall 2012 semester. Finally, the BOT has reviewed and revised the UWest Bylaws and is creating a Board of Trustees Committees Policy.

Revised Bylaws

The newly constituted Board has given considerable attention and care to revising the [UWest Bylaws](#). The bylaws now comply with many of the recommendations of the WASC Policy on Independent Governing Boards, including a *Restriction Regarding Interested Trustees* (III.6), the authority of the Board to appoint and evaluate the President (IV.2), the size of the Board (III.2), number of meetings per year (III.8), requirements for quorum (III.13), methods for member selection, replacement and renewal (IV.3, 5), provision for staggered terms of service (III.4), and the duties of the chair, secretary, and treasurer (IV.7,8,9).

During the time period that the Trustees were revising the UWest Bylaws, WASC ratified the [Policy on Independent Governing Boards](#), which WASC President Ralph Wolff formally announced in an email communication to member institutions on August 10, just three weeks before the submission of this report. The BOT members have now taken the document under advisement and are currently developing a plan to update the UWest Bylaws additionally in order to bring them into compliance with the new policy within the current academic year. The BOT is preparing a report on these plans that will be provided to the Chair of the Visiting Team by October 8, 2012.

Evaluation of the President

As stated in the UWest Bylaws, the BOT appoints the UWest President, who serves at the pleasure of the Board (IV.2.(c)). At their June 2012 meeting, the Trustees invited President Wu to perform a self-evaluation. Dr. Wu completed this evaluation in July and submitted his self-evaluation to the Board, which is currently reviewing it and will take it up at their October meeting. This is the timeline being followed, according to a [White Paper](#) issued by the BOT:

- (1) The President shall be reviewed during the last year of a contract and notified of the findings of the review in January of that year.

¹⁰ WASC Evidence/2–Board of Trustees/Agenda and Minutes contains numerous documents reflecting BOT oversight, guidance and support.

¹¹ Minutes from the BOT special meeting of March 16, 2012, contain privileged information on salary increases and may be viewed by Special Visit team members upon request.

- (2) The review will start with a self-evaluation report from the president as an opportunity to describe fully the goals, activities, and accomplishments. (Beginning months of the last year of a contract. June-July)
- (3) Following the self-evaluation, the BOT will collect information from the campus community regarding the assessment of the president by staff and faculty. (October)
- (4) The BOT will bring in an outside reviewer to examine the evidence and give an appraisal and recommendation for the completion of the review. (November)
- (5) The BOT will have a meeting with the president to go over the findings and recommendations and provide an opportunity for a response. (December)
- (6) The BOT will meet in private session and after the discussions hold a vote on whether to extend a renewal to the president or a notice of non-renewal of the contract. (December)

It is expected that revisions to the UWest Bylaws will formalize the procedures, tools and timeline for the evaluation of the President that are currently underway.

Results & Feedback

The actions of the Board of Trustees have resulted in several positive outcomes immediately affecting UWest.

First, the expansion of the Board has resulted in valued additional expertise and diversified backgrounds so that the BOT is more able to closely and better oversee, advise, and support University management. Examples of this increased experience and collaboration in action include the approval of UWest's strategic priorities, their inclusion in the Board's strategic visioning process, and the swift revision of the current fiscal year budget.

Second, there is now more direct interaction between Trustees and University leadership, faculty, staff, and students. In addition to formal meetings, members of the administration have had dinner with BOT members. Trustees have been able to visit campus for special events and lectures. Designated non-voting administrative members have been appointed to each Board committee, leading to greater interaction and communication. Board members are also more involved directly with students and campus activities. Trustee Roger Frank has collaborated with students to create and operate an Entrepreneurship Club. Trustee Dr. Lewis Lancaster regularly holds a [free lecture series](#) on campus every year. Students and the Student Government President have spoken at BOT meetings and met Trustees. Student leaders have delivered written reports and memos to the Board multiple times and received feedback and replies. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Venerable Hsin Ting, has personally donated funds to support student government, clubs, and activities, creating a strong bond between students and trustees.

The BOT is continually investigating new initiatives, such as [partnerships with local high schools](#) and cooperation with government agencies on promising research initiatives. More frequent meetings that are held on campus have enabled the Board to provide faster feedback and suggestions on University administration's management proposals. Collaboration between the Board and administration on the University's vision and direction has greatly improved.

Ongoing & Planned Actions

During the 2012/2013 academic year, the Board will finalize its planned vision for University of the West. These efforts will be guided by the Strategic Planning Committee, of which every Trustee is a member. The Board will work to create a short term plan as well as a longer five-year vision for the growth of UWest.

Furthermore, the Board's ongoing actions include:

- Completion of the [evaluation](#) of the University President, Dr. C.S. Wu
- Advisement of the CFO Search Committee
- Revision of the UWest Bylaws in line with the WASC Policy on Independent Governing Boards
- Inclusion of non-voting student and faculty members on all BOT committees, including representation of the Academic Senate Chair on the Academic Affairs Committee
- Review of the following Academic Affairs plans and policies:

- Academic Plan
- Teaching-Scholarship-Service Model
- Review of the following Administrative policies:
 - Employee Termination
 - Notice of Non-Renewal of Contract
 - Information Technology policies
- Review of the following fiduciary practices and policies:
 - Risk management protocols
 - Accounting practices
 - Budget planning

Action Item 3: Leadership

WASC's Concerns

Action Item 3 requires a determination whether UWest has a sufficient cadre of appropriately qualified and experienced administrators to provide leadership and management in all aspects of the University's operation. UWest should provide an explanation of its analysis and organization charts illustrating reporting lines, accountability and decision making; job descriptions; information on new hires; and administrators' resumes.

Page 2 of the Action Letter states:

The Commission urges the leadership and board to evaluate whether the University has a sufficient cadre of appropriately qualified and experience administrators to provide leadership and management in all aspects of the University's operation, in keeping with CFR 3.10. Further, the Commission expects to see stable leadership and clear lines of accountability and decision making by the time of the next visit.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Pages 1-2
WASC CPR Report	Pages 5, 6, 9, 15, 18, 19, 30-32, 34, 35, and 37
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.9, 3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10

UWest's Concerns

Presidency

Action Item 3 concerns UWest's ability and commitment to provide stable leadership by qualified and experienced administrators. The University recognizes the Commission's concern in this area as prior to the 2010 CPR Visit, UWest experienced a significant change in leadership when the very dynamic and innovative Dr. Allen M. Huang stepped down from the presidency in June 2008. After that, the University was led by interim President C.F. Lee, an eminently qualified administrator, who, however, was unable to commit to the University over the long term. UWest's current [President, Dr. C.S. Wu](#) joined the University in August 2010 just months before the CPR Visit, and he has brought stability to the post and a wealth of knowledge and experience to the University's senior management team. Dr. Wu is highly qualified and experienced. He spent 18 years in higher education administration in Taiwan, including the position of Dean of Academic Affairs at Fo Guang University, a sister university of UWest. He is, thus, very familiar with the Fo Guang Shan system and its educational mission. Dr. Wu also holds a doctorate in finance from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. To date, his achievements as UWest President include the hiring of seven new full-time faculty members, the raising of \$700,000 in a new scholarship fund ([Lotus Scholarships](#)), and an increase of enrollment from 229 when he took up office to slightly over 300 in the Fall 2012 semester.

Dean of Academic Affairs

Shortly before the 2010 CPR Visit, UWest had also just hired a new full-time [Dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. William Howe](#). Dr. Howe has served the University for the past two years and has brought his professional expertise to bear, overseeing, among other things, the hiring of highly qualified new faculty and administrators in Business Administration, Psychology, English, Religious Studies, and Buddhist Chaplaincy. His accomplishments include an overhaul of faculty policies and oversight of the creation of a faculty development website and workshops. Dr. Howe has over 25 years of professional experience in educational administration and teaching. He holds multiple degrees in educational leadership, including a doctorate from Stanford and a master of education degree from Harvard.

UWest's senior management further includes the Chief Financial Officer, currently Mr. Jeffrey Lin and the Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Arthur Peterson (see below) as well as the Assistant Dean for Assessment, Dr. Bill Chen (see Action Item 7: Assessment).

Implemented Actions

CFO and COO

Following WASC's requirement, UWest has separated the positions of President and Chief Financial Officer. Dr. C.S. Wu remains President while [Jeffrey Lin](#) was appointed [CFO](#) effective July 1, 2011. Mr. Lin has extensive practical business experience and is intimately familiar with UWest, having served as Director of General Services since May 1, 2006. He has also completed two levels of WACUBO College Accounting training to date. According to the [current organizational chart](#), the CFO oversees the following departments and offices: Accounting, Human Resources¹², Information Technology, Repair and Maintenance, Facilities and Purchasing, Food Services, Reception, Bookstore and Café, Safety and Security, and summer Programs in American Cultural Exchange (PACE). UWest has recently begun the process of adding to its leadership staff by further separating the role of CFO from the new position of [Chief Operational Officer](#), a role Mr. Lin will assume moving forward. UWest has begun a job search¹³ for a new CFO who, under the [new organizational chart](#), will oversee the Office of Accounting and the Office of Budget.

Unexpected Turnover

While UWest's senior administration has enjoyed stability in the posts of President and Academic Affairs, the position of [Dean of Student Affairs](#) (or the equivalent) has changed several times due to unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances. Mr. Heemanshu Bhagat, hired in June 2010 as Dean of Enrollment and Student Affairs, was released from his contract in June of 2011. Although UWest regrets the impact of this turnover on students, the University felt it was clearly in the best interests of students and the institution and provided WASC detailed evidence¹⁴ for the circumstances necessitating this personnel change.

After Mr. Bhagat's departure, [Dr. Kenneth Locke](#), formerly Chair of Religious Studies, was appointed to the renamed post of Dean of Administration. Dr. Locke was and remained Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) in this position. Sadly for the UWest community, Dr. Locke fell ill in January 2012 and passed away in April of 2012, only four months before the submission of this report. During his illness, [Vanessa Karam](#), General Education Coordinator, was named ALO and she continues in that position. Ms. Karam has held various positions with UWest since January 2000 and in recent years has been instrumental in the development of learning outcomes, retention plans and policies, and the International Student Services Office.

Recovering from a Serious Loss

The loss of Dr. Locke cannot be underestimated in terms of its impact on the University and warrants further mention in this report. Dr. Locke served the Religious Studies Department as a revered professor and mentor and a highly effective administrator for more than a decade. He closely assisted then-Dean of Academic Affairs and ALO Dr. Ananda Guruge in the preparations of the University's application for initial accreditation, which was granted in February 2006. After that, Dr. Locke was responsible for overseeing the substantive change proposals that introduced the Master of Divinity in Buddhist Chaplaincy and the Master of Arts in Psychology programs to UWest. He was appointed ALO in 2008 and became responsible for steering UWest through the reaffirmation of accreditation process, which began with the Institutional Proposal in 2008 and the CPR Report and Visit in 2010. Suffering the loss of a senior administrator with such talents, devotion to mission, and institutional memory as Dr. Locke would not be easy for any organization. For a small school like UWest, the impact is that much greater. Nevertheless, the University, while deeply and continually saddened by this loss, has been able to make prompt administrative adjustments in order to continue Dr. Locke's work and complete the Special Report on time. In the short period since his passing in April, UWest has appointed a new ALO and

¹² HR has recently been placed under the Office of the President, see [New Organizational Chart](#).

¹³ Advertised at

<http://www.higheredjobs.com/search/details.cfm?JobCode=175655662&Title=Chief%20Financial%20Officer>.

¹⁴ This evidence contains confidential, privileged information and can, therefore, not be included in this report. Team members may request further explanation as well as insight into the respective files during the Special Visit.

interim Dean of Student Affairs, and hired a new Chair of Religious Studies. UWest believes that the speed and success of its response to this crisis are an indication of the University's administrative capacity and a tribute to the spirit of Dr. Locke.

Dean of Student Affairs

After Dr. Locke's passing, [Dr. Arthur Peterson](#), Special Advisor to President Wu and President Emeritus of the Thunderbird School of Global Management, accepted the interim post of [Dean of Student Affairs](#). Dr. Peterson holds degrees from Yale University and the University of Southern California; he also earned a doctorate in political theory from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Peterson brings with him a wealth of experience, including over 50 years in educational leadership. However, he anticipates fulfilling the responsibilities of Dean only until a permanent, full-time candidate can be hired. Dr. Peterson was President of Thunderbird when that school was granted regional accreditation (NCA), and he has been integral in UWest's long term and strategic planning initiatives. UWest looks forward to Dr. Peterson's continued support as Special Advisor to the President, a role he has fulfilled since 2010.

At the time of the writing of this report, UWest is conducting a job search¹⁵ for a full-time Dean of Student Affairs and expects to have completed at least the first round of interviews by the time of the Special Visit in October.

Other New Administrators

Since the CPR Visit in December 2010, the University has hired well-qualified experienced administrators as the [Extended Studies Coordinator](#), [English Department Coordinator](#), and [Religious Studies Chair](#). The position of [General Education Coordinator](#) has also been expanded to a full-time position.

Additionally, the University had to find a replacement for the critical position of Registrar, when Ms. Carmela Chaney resigned and moved out of state this summer. Fortunately, the search was quickly completed, and UWest was able to recruit [Ms. Jeanette Anderson](#), who holds a degree from the University of California at Davis and brings fifteen years of experience as a registrar to her new job.

Student Leadership

Finally, leadership has also been expanded to include student leadership. Beginning in Summer 2011, students were invited to participate on all University committees except the Executive Cabinet¹⁶. These student representatives are appointed in cooperation with the Student Government and now regularly attend [MIC](#), [UWAC](#), [APCC](#), Academic Senate, [Full Cabinet](#), and other committee meetings. The Student Government President also has a [regular weekly meeting](#) with the University President.

In 2011, the growing Student Government (then called UWSA) worked with the Office of Finance and Accounting to reform [disbursement polices](#) for student association fees. This allowed student clubs to have easier access to funding for the purposes of student events and activities. University leaders and administrators have strongly supported the growth of student leadership on campus.

Results & Feedback

Analysis of Qualifications and Experience

Although UWest was relatively confident about the qualifications and experience of its senior administrators, it wanted to look outward for verification. Thus, when the University conducted the [cohort comparison study](#), the comparison also included an [analysis of the background and experience](#) of those schools' leading administrators. The result of the comparison showed that the UWest President, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dean of Student

¹⁵ See advertisement at

<http://www.higheredjobs.com/search/details.cfm?JobCode=175650869&Title=Dean%20of%20Student%20Affairs>

¹⁶ However the Student Government President and other student representatives frequently attend non-privileged portions of the weekly Executive Cabinet meetings by request or invitation.

Affairs are much like their counterparts at the comparable institutions in terms of their educational qualifications, specializations, and extensive experience in higher education administration. Only in the position of CFO did the results show that UWest's current CFO has a qualified yet significantly different background than the financial officers at other schools. With the imminent hiring of a new CFO, the University intends to eliminate this one discrepancy.

Stability

Over the past two years, UWest's senior leadership team has proven quite stable. Drs. Wu, Howe, and Peterson have worked together and continue to expand their team. Per WASC's recommendation, UWest removed the conflict of interest between the position of the President and CFO by splitting the responsibilities, thereby expanding the leadership team by the full-time position of CFO. The University further anticipates improved management and workflow as a result of creating and filling the new COO position and hiring a separate CFO. With the hiring of a new full-time Dean of Student Affairs, UWest's senior administration team will consist of President, CFO, COO, Dean of Academic Affairs, and Dean of Student Affairs by the end of 2012. The University feels that with enrollment at roughly 300 students, UWest will continue to be served by a sufficient cadre of appropriately qualified and experienced administrators, prepared to lead the University into further growth and expansion. Furthermore, stability and oversight of the University leadership are bolstered by the newly constituted and proactive Board of Trustees (see Action Item 2).

Responsibility and Accountability

The new [organizational chart](#) demonstrates the reporting lines and areas of responsibility. The [major decision making chart](#) further gives an overview of the authority for major decisions at UWest. Moreover, each position at UWest has a job description¹⁷ listing responsibilities and reporting lines, and each employee is evaluated annually according to a formal evaluation process that includes a performance evaluation rubric¹⁸ detailing the goals, strategies, timeline, and accomplishments for the respective position. As a result, accountability is systematically provided for University-wide, and staff and faculty are aware of their responsibilities and their reporting lines.

Integral Leadership

Over the past two years, UWest has moved significantly in the direction of shared leadership, something that is called for increasingly by the Association of Governing Boards, experts within the field of leadership studies, as well as, of course, regional accreditors. Specifically, the University has expanded and created a more effective **leadership team**, particularly in the areas of strategic planning. Leadership has worked together with multiple constituencies to create integrated plans that fulfill the mission. As a result of the collaboration of this leadership team, UWest has produced [strategic priorities](#) to guide its growth over the next five years. The University is now in the process of fully fleshing out those priorities with strategies, methods, measurable goals, timelines, and assignments of responsibility. This process has been completed for the first and second of the four strategic priorities with the adoption of the [Enrollment Management Plan](#) (including execution timelines for [Recruitment](#) and [Retention](#)) and the [Communication Report](#). The second two strategic priorities, to grow academically and grow financially, are in the planning stages. (See Action Item 4: Resources for more information on actions accomplished and planned for each of the four strategic priorities.)

Leadership has also been able to improve and expand **student support and services** through the reallocation of resources, personnel, and funding (see Action Item 4: Resources). Not only have Fall 2012 enrollments increased by 30% over Fall 2011, but the number of students living on campus has gone up significantly. Working together with the [Student Success Center](#), leadership has implemented more effective practices and policies to retain and graduate students, such as entry testing, [SEAS](#), and tutoring. Academic advising has been improved and, as a

¹⁷ Job descriptions for all leadership positions can be found in the WASC Evidence/ 3–Leadership.

¹⁸ Sample faculty and staff job performance evaluation forms can be found in WASC Evidence/3– Leadership.

result, students are better prepared to begin their education at UWest and are enrolled in the proper course sequence.

As mentioned earlier, **Academic Affairs** has also benefited from the leadership of several new department heads. The selection of a [new Chair](#) and the promotion of an [existing faculty member](#) to the role of Assistant Chair provide strong academic leadership in Religious Studies. The splitting off of the Buddhist Chaplaincy Program from Religious Studies into a separate department as well as the creation of an additional full-time position in that new department also provides for better administrative. Moreover, the position of [General Education Coordinator](#) has been expanded to a full time appointment and English and Extended Studies have hired new department heads.

These new academic leaders, together with other academic advisors, will have no shortage of students to care for thanks to increasing enrollments which are largely due to President Wu's tireless fundraising for the new [Lotus Scholarships](#), 83 of which were awarded this fall. This year, President Wu collaborated with various donors to raise \$700,000 just for these new scholarships. Students have benefited greatly from this effort.

UWest has empowered student leaders through increased student voice in University business and improved access to funding. As a result, the Student Government has doubled in size and student clubs¹⁹ have doubled in number since 2010. Student-led [events and activities](#) on and off campus have increased from a few per week to, frequently, multiple activities on a given day. Overall [student satisfaction](#) has increased partly as a result of these efforts.

Ongoing & Planned Actions

Separation of the CFO position into a CFO position and a COO position is expected to provide better administration and management. UWest has formed a CFO search committee and will begin interviewing potential candidates within the next few weeks. UWest is looking for a highly qualified CFO with an MBA, good experience in institutional accounting, and one, preferably, who is also a certified public accountant. In addition, released time for faculty members who are extremely well qualified in collegiate financial accounting systems can help attenuate concerns regarding financial-knowledge resources. The proficiency of University leadership in the financial area can also be strengthened by the enrollment of top management and accounting personnel in special courses, such as those sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards, for additional training in academic budgeting and accounting.

Strategic planning initiatives continue. Existing plans such as the Enrollment Management Plan and Communication Report are currently being implemented by the administration. They include a number of suggestions for increasing enrollment and improving communication which will begin to show their effects over the next few years. These plans will be continually monitored for effectiveness with ongoing process improvement and revision of both methods and goals as necessary. A number of [assessment procedures](#) already exist to monitor their effectiveness. These tools will also be [regularly evaluated](#) to make sure all necessary data and areas are being fully and accurately assessed.

UWest expects to fully articulate the final two strategic priorities within the course of the next fiscal year. Just as it has created comprehensive plans to boost enrollments and improve communications, leadership will also facilitate broad stakeholder involvement to create plans to expand academically and grow financially. Academic growth will require the input of not only top administrators, but also the Academic Senate, Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee, full-time and adjunct faculty, the Board of Trustees, alumni, and student leaders. Financial growth will require special commitment from top administrators, the Board of Trustees, the Offices of Finance and Budget, alumni, and donors. Leadership is currently discussing the possibility of creating an Office of Development with a full-time Development Officer.

¹⁹ See <http://www.uwsa.net/clubs/existing-clubs>

Action Item 4: Resources

WASC’s Concerns

Action Item 4 seeks to ensure the provision of adequate resources to meet UWest’s mission and support its educational offerings, as demonstrated by balanced budgets, the sufficiency of funding in various areas, and increasing enrollment. UWest should provide documentation showing that it is providing adequate resources for student services, academic programming, qualified faculty to meet the needs of all academic programs, faculty training and development, program staffing, and enrollment services. This should include plans to increase enrollment, data on retention and graduation, the publication of data on student achievement, and the availability of accurate and useful data for planning and decision-making.

Page 3 of the Action Letter states:

The Commission endorses the team’s recommendation that UWest “must invest additional resources to achieve its priority strategic objectives” by making substantial investments in student life, student services, academic programs, additional qualified faculty, faculty training and development, program staffing, and enrollment services. The Commission urges UWest to examine all aspects of its operation in order to identify areas that are not adequately resourced and to develop plans to better support programs, students and faculty. The University should also proceed with its plans to increase enrollment, track graduation and retention, and publish student achievement data. The Commission was encouraged to learn from your response to the team report that actions are already being taken to address this concern. Finally, UWest is expected to show that it has and is using accurate and up-to-date data from institutional research to inform the development and implementation of plans and guide resource allocation.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Pages 3-4
WASC CPR Report	Pages 5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 30, 31, and 35-37
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.2, 2.6, 2.11, 2.13, 3.1-5, 3.8, and 4.1-5

UWest’s Concerns

UWest whole-heartedly agrees with WASC’s concerns in this area. In order to address these concerns, UWest has engaged in a *student-centered, mission-driven decision making framework*. This framework emerges from the holistic process for how UWest achieves its goals. The process relies heavily on internal data and external research of best practices in the industry. Increasing enrollment is UWest’s highest priority. In order to achieve that goal, the University is actively working to create a student-centered culture to guide decisions about the distribution of resources, using enrollment, retention, graduation, and student satisfaction as key metrics to evaluate the efficacy of resource allocation. The plans, decisions, and resources dedicated to this goal are further guided by the mission of the University as an institution of higher learning.

This student-centered, mission-driven framework has given UWest the tools and guidance it needs to think strategically and make long-term plans. It has emerged organically from multiple areas and initiatives, which simultaneously sought not only to redress WASC’s concerns, but also to improve UWest’s overall functioning. These activities will be discussed in detail under “Implemented Actions,” with the understanding that many of them happened concurrently, rather than sequentially, and helped lead UWest to discover a viable decision-making framework for future actions. In the section below on “Ongoing and Planned Actions”, UWest will discuss projects as they pertain to resource allocation under the heading of the four strategic priorities discussed in earlier sections. First, it is important to understand how these four priorities were derived and how UWest will continue the ongoing process of strategic thinking.

Strategic Thinking

The strategic thinking undergirding the strategy process currently in place at UWest involves encouraging its leaders to learn from all sources – both from the insights of their personal experiences and the experiences of others throughout the organization – and from the hard data of institutional research, ongoing academic and market research, and best practices of peer institutions. A synthesis of that learning has resulted in four strategic priorities that will shape the future direction of the University. Importantly, UWest’s pursuit of these strategic priorities will benefit the institution as a whole, beyond simply ensuring reaccreditation, and lead to the furtherance of the UWest mission.

Strategic planning, as was manifest in the longer strategic plan draft created at the University in Fall 2011, is about analysis – breaking down a goal into steps, designing how the steps may be implemented, and estimating the anticipated consequences of each step. Strategic thinking, on the other hand, is about using intuition and creativity to formulate an integrated perspective, a vision, of where the organization is heading. Proponents of the older view of strategic planning believe that analysis encompasses synthesis; that in the best practice, strategic planning, strategic thinking, and strategy making are synonymous and always can and should be formalized. Many leaders in strategy making now hold that it is important to realize that although we think (plan) in order to act, we sometimes act in order to think. It is this second process, strategic thinking, which UWest has chosen to operate under and which will guide future planning efforts.

When UWest received the helpful recommendations from WASC in both the Visiting Team Report and the seven Action Items in the March 2011 letter, it acted on those recommendations by immediately addressing the deficiencies through a variety of constructive programs. In the process, over the past two years, the institution has learned much, and from that learning process has come the strategic thinking which has produced the strategic priorities that constitute the heart of the current Strategic Plan embodied in the [Action Report](#) to the Board of Trustees.

Following the iteration of the Institutional Context (taken directly from the [Strategic Plan Draft](#) developed in Fall 2011), the Action Report set four specific Strategic Priorities to respond to the recognized major deficiencies which require immediate and prioritized attention. The strategic priorities are to 1) Increase Enrollment, 2) Improve Communication, 3) Grow Academically, and 4) Grow Financially. UWest is already well on its way to achieving those goals, particularly regarding enrollment.

In the last five years, the student body has grown from 79 students in Fall 2007 to 306 students in Fall 2012. In the past year alone, this represents a 30% increase in the student body, from 235 students in Fall 2011. UWest has set goals to continue increasing enrollment numbers by 50 students per year, reaching 500 in 2017, and fully anticipates achieving these goals. As enrollment increases, so will revenue, and UWest will become more financially independent. However, as the student body grows, so too will expenses, and UWest has engaged in a thorough planning and budgeting process to ensure departments and programs are adequately staffed and supported.

As part of this strategic thinking process, the Institutional Research and Assessment Office conducted a [Comparison Study](#) of student characteristics, revenue sources, and expenditure breakdowns of a select cohort of institutions similar to UWest. The comparison schools had 4-year or more programs, WASC-accreditation, similar enrollments, and similar expenses to UWest or to what UWest envisions in the next ten years. This study found that UWest was comparable to the cohort on most factors (e.g. revenue and expense categories, conversion and retention rates). The main differences between UWest and these cohort schools was that 1) UWest has higher than average revenue from “affiliated entities,” i.e. Fo Guang Shan, 2) lower than average spending on student services such as admissions, the registrar, and student life, yet 3) higher than average support spending overall (academic and institutional) paired with lower than average instructional spending. The higher than average funding from UWest’s related entity, Fo Guang Shan, has not proven problematic. Fo Guang Shan has been a steady source of support, allowing the University to balance its budget every year since its founding, which, in turn has allowed UWest to maintain a very competitive low tuition. As the section below on “Strategic Investments” shows, UWest is working to bring the expense categories into alignment with standard industry

practice in order to better achieve its educational mission. These efforts have already resulted in positive outcomes, as will be seen in the “Results and Feedback” section.

Implemented Actions

Strategic Investments

Since WASC’s CPR visit to UWest in 2010, the University has made major investments of [resources](#)²⁰ in several strategic areas. These resources include financial support, personnel support, physical improvements, and “intellectual investments” such as the realignment of leadership vision and administrative oversight. This section will summarize financial investments and strategic partnerships, while the sections below will detail how those resources have been used.

These strategic investments are most evident in areas of instruction and research. Funding for research has increased fivefold, from a little over \$30,000 in 2010/11 to just \$55,000 in 2011/12 and now to almost \$200,000 budgeted for 2012/13. This includes increases in funding for individual faculty as well as several large projects. Funding for instruction has increased by 45% in these two short years. Funding for academic support (i.e. administrative assistance, the library, and educational technology resources) has also increased 18% over this period. Together, overall investment in research and teaching has increased from just over \$2 million in 2010 to almost \$3 million in 2012.

In addition to these financial investments, UWest has entered into a consortium agreement with [Claremont Lincoln University](#) (CLU) which has substantially expanded course offerings to UWest students at no additional cost to the University or the students (who continue to pay UWest tuition rates for CLU classes). This has added another 80 available courses to UWest’s current Fall 108-course schedule. While UWest recognizes that the overall financial investment per student has not changed dramatically in the last two years--due to off-setting increases in enrollment--the overall educational opportunity available to students has increased significantly. This Fall, UWest students have enrolled in five different CLU courses. UWest expects this number to grow as students become more familiar with the opportunities offered by CLU. The consortium agreement is a strategic investment of time and relationship-building which may ultimately prove more important than simple financial calculations indicate.

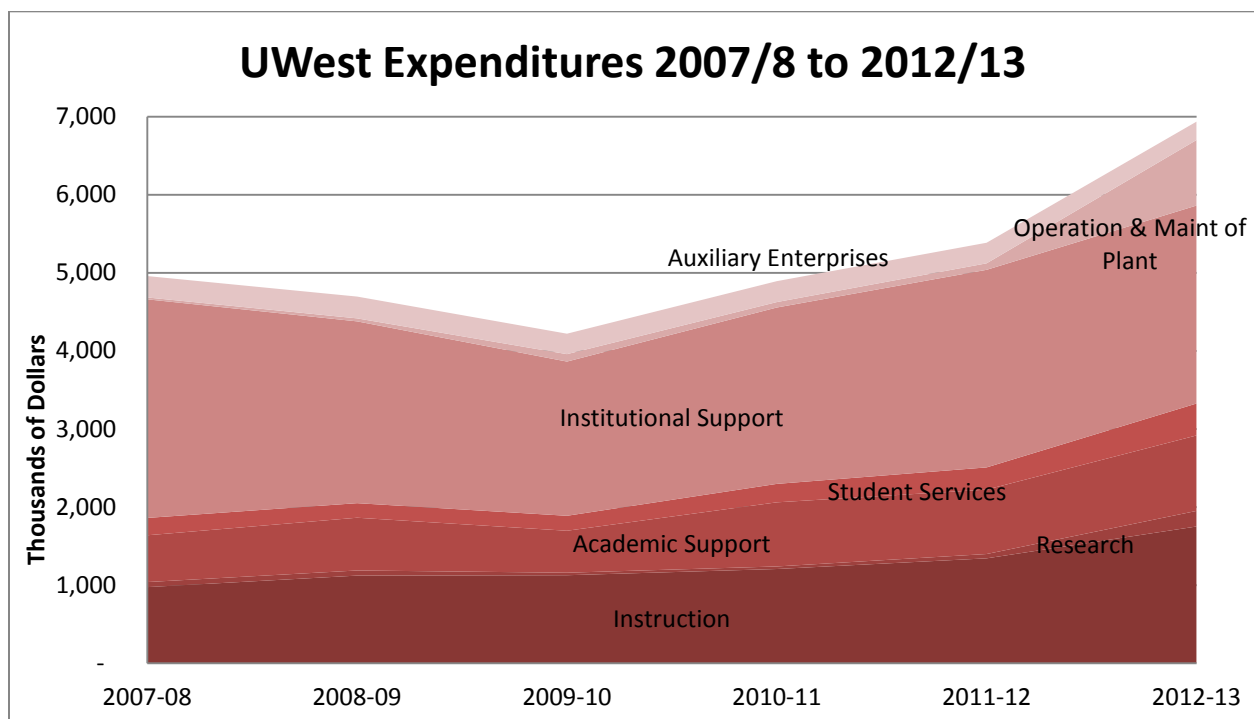
A second major area of investment is Student Services, such as the Office of Student Life, the Wellness Center, and the Student Success Center. Overall spending has increased 73% in the past two years, from \$236,000 to \$408,000. This translates to an additional \$242 invested in the holistic well-being of each student who attends UWest this Fall. As a percentage of overall expenditures, Student Services has risen from 3.97% in 2008/9 to 5.89% in 2012/13. UWest recognizes that this is still on the low side for a school of this size, but it is within the range of the comparison cohort selected for study. As these investments yield results, UWest will be in a better position to engage in ongoing process improvement (and continued investment) based on feedback from the assessment systems now in place (see Action Item 7: Assessment).

UWest understands the challenges of meeting the needs of a growing student body, which is now 42% larger than it was during the CPR Visit in 2010. Therefore, it has invested in strategic partnerships with student leadership, organizations, and clubs to encourage a vibrant campus community. Additional financial resources have been dedicated to these areas, such as an increase in the student association fee (from \$10 to \$15 per semester per student), \$2,000 in private donations made directly to Student Government by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and a new Student Leadership Scholarship first awarded in May 2012. Although small in total amount, the impact of these investments is disproportional to the impact of similar investments in University departments. This is because these “soft” investments serve to empower students directly and encourage a culture of service and volunteerism which is difficult to estimate in dollars and cents.

²⁰ See WASC Evidence/4 – Resources/UWest Fiscal Reports, for fiscal data on revenue, expenditures, assets, and endowment information.

Major investments are also being made in capital improvements in 2012/13. Two major projects account for a tenfold increase in expenditures for operation and maintenance of the plant: roadways and parking lot repaving and improvements. and a major upgrade to the University's information technology infrastructure. The total investment is over \$700,000, which, UWest is proud to say, is fully funded out of existing resources. As these plant improvements are not financed through loans or similar means, they incur no new debt or interest expenses.

Finally, financial investment in institutional support has increased 12% in the last two years, from \$2.26 million to \$2.54 million annually. While UWest has worked diligently to improve staff salaries and benefits, it has also been able to keep basic overhead low, thanks largely to being debt-free. Moreover, while institutional support expenses have also grown, as a percentage of total expenditures, they have actually decreased from a high of 51.72% in 2011/12 to just 36.56% in 2012/13. This is the result of a reallocation of resources and prioritization of investment in the areas mentioned above. In addition, expenses of auxiliary enterprises have actually decreased by around 12% in the last two years, saving UWest almost \$30,000 in 2012/13 alone. This is due in large part to increasing revenue from these auxiliary enterprises which make them more cost effective.



The sections below detail how these investments have been used and how this has impacted the University. Not only have they resulted in better recruiting, improved retention, higher enrollments, and increased student satisfaction, they have also served to realign UWest's operations with its basic mission to provide a whole-person education and bring East and West together.

Increasing Enrollment and Retention

Enrollment management requires a holistic approach, with regular input from multiple campus constituencies. In the 2010 UWest CPR Report, eight interdependent activities were identified: 1) mission and identity clarification, 2) academic program development, 3) marketing, 4) recruiting, 5) admissions, 6) financial aid, 7) new student orientation, and 8) retention and persistence. The Dean of Student Affairs created an interdisciplinary Enrollment Management Team, which has met weekly for the past six months. It consists of the President, Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Academic Affairs, Enrollment Counselor, Institutional Research Officer, student leaders, and occasionally various invited faculty and staff representing different disciplines and interests. (This team replaces the earlier Strategic Team for Enrollment Management and Planning or STEM Committee, which lapsed in 2011 due to turnover in the Dean of Student Affairs position.) The Enrollment Team

addressed the eight activities mentioned above and regularly consulted (many members serve concurrently) with other committees, such as the Mission and Identity Committee, Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee, Academic Senate, and University-Wide Assessment Committee, as well as the Student Government and various academic departments. As a result of this collaboration, the team developed a comprehensive [Enrollment Management Plan](#) based on internal data and insight as well as extensive research centering on the best practices in the areas of marketing, recruitment, and retention found in other highly successful institutions. This plan is summarized in the section for “Ongoing and Planned Actions” under Strategic Priority 1, below.

Even as the Enrollment Management Plan was being written, UWest had already dedicated new resources to advertising in print, radio, billboard, and online media and hired two new recruiters to conduct in-person outreach to local high schools and community colleges. The President himself networked with Asian colleges, universities, and high schools and tapped into the existing network of worldwide Fo Guang Shan institutions (religious and educational) to improve international recruiting. In addition, UWest dedicated more funding and personnel to Student Services to improve student satisfaction and retention rates and worked with academic departments to improve advising in order to keep students on track to graduate. This includes hiring Dr. Keith Brown as [Student Success Center](#) Coordinator and Jennifer Derry as International Student Services Assistant. UWest also hired a Wellness Coordinator and Student Life Director in 2010, although ultimately neither candidate remained with the University. The University is currently seeking to fill these positions again with qualified candidates willing to make a long-term commitment to UWest and the mission of the institution. Despite this turnover, the annual student satisfaction survey reported increased levels of satisfaction with Student Services departments.

In addition to increased investment in marketing, recruiting, and retention, UWest has also sought to support students in their education with the creation of the [Lotus Scholarship Program](#). This program awards \$5,000 and \$10,000 annual scholarships (which are renewable). These scholarships are entirely donor funded. President Wu has been able to raise \$700,000 to support the Lotus Scholarship program and is currently engaged in fundraising for 2013/14 for twice that level. UWest has grown its existing International Buddhist Education Foundation (IBEF), Golden Benefactor, and UWest scholarships and fellowships by a total of \$44,000 in additional funding in 2012/13, and maintained available federal and state financial aid programs. The University has also worked to make the financial aid processes easier by getting information to students earlier and more frequently.

Increasing Resources for Academic Programs

Since the 2010 CPR Visit, the University has hired seven new full-time faculty, including two for Business Administration, two for Religious Studies (a department chair and assistant chair), one for English (a program coordinator), one for Psychology, and one for Buddhist Chaplaincy. For the Psychology and Chaplaincy programs, this constitutes an increase in full-time faculty of 100%. Additionally, the position of General Education Coordinator has been made full time. All new faculty members are highly qualified in their areas and dedicated to the mission of UWest.

In an ongoing effort to retain excellent faculty, the University increased salary for all full-time faculty as follows: two faculty members received salary increases of 21-26%, two received salary increases of 15-16%, two received increases of 5-6%, and the remaining faculty received salary increases of 2%. The wide range of salary increases reflects the fact that some junior faculty members received a rather substantial increase in an effort to bring them to the median pay line of comparable schools over the course of two years—a goal fully endorsed of the Board of Trustees in their [March meeting](#).

In addition, new research funding makes \$5,000 available to faculty members who wish to pursue research projects, overseen by a Faculty Research Committee. Funding for the Institute of Chinese Buddhist Studies (ICBS) has also increased to \$122,000 in 2012/13 in order to support several exciting projects, including a young scholars seminar and a new global conference on the Chinese Buddhist Canon. ICBS is also supporting the ongoing field research for a monograph on the “Youngle Northern Edition Buddhist Canon” by UWest professor Dr. Darui Long, which ICBS hopes to publish in the next three to five years.

Faculty Training and Development

UWest created a Faculty Development website in the summer of 2011, held the first Faculty Development Workshop in December 2011, and dedicated more funds for faculty development, research, and training in the 2012/13 budget. The Faculty Development website both aggregates content from other sources regarding best practices relevant to the UWest [Teaching-Scholarship-Service Model](#) and develops original content particular to UWest, such as tutorials on course learning outcome rubric design, assessment implementation, and mission-related content. The first Faculty Development workshop covered the design of course learning outcomes and the implementation of TaskStream. Workshop videos are hosted on the Faculty Development website for faculty who are unable to attend in person.

Student Services

Information about Student Services is published in the [UWest Student Handbook](#). Shortly before the 2010 CPR Team Visit, UWest created the full-time position of [Student Success Center](#) (SSC) Coordinator, and filled it with a well-qualified and experienced professional, Dr. Keith Brown. The SSC Coordinator manages the University's [Student Early Alert System](#) (SEAS). SEAS is a key component in UWest's efforts to provide proactive student support and improve retention and persistence. In addition, the Student Success Center is now proctoring the University's writing and math assessment tests for all incoming undergraduate students. Based on the results of these tests, new students are placed in the requisite foundational or, where necessary, developmental math and writing courses in their first semester of study at UWest. This is another piece in the University's plan to improve student success and, thus, retention. The SSC also meets with students identified as at-risk (GPA below 2.5) to develop an [Individual Learning Plan](#).

In addition, UWest has collaborated with the Student Government to create a [Peer Mentoring Program](#) to complement the SSC and Wellness Center (when reopened) by providing social support to first-time undergraduate students who are need-identified by campus faculty and staff. As part of the Enrollment Management Plan, the Student Government has created a detailed timeline for Fall 2012 for the selection and training of mentors and the assigning of mentees on a 1 : 1 ratio. Senior students in good academic standing with strong communication skills and experience at UWest will be referred to the program by formal letters of recommendation. If this pilot program is successful, the Office of Student Life expects to take over management, as the number of both mentors and mentees grows, and dedicate additional financial resources to its continued success.

Students also need assistance regarding a number of important logistical details, such as visas (for international students), housing, food, technology needs, financial aid, and social opportunities. Since October 2011, the International Student Services Office has added the 4/5ths-position of [International Student Services Assistant](#) to be able to continue to provide excellent service to the increasing number of international students at UWest. Physical improvements have been made to the residence halls, including complete interior and exterior painting and upgrades in lighting and furniture, as well as new flooring and equipment in the game room and gym. UWest has also added a new full-size basketball court thanks to the generosity of a single donor. Computers in the library were fully replaced in August 2012. Efforts to improve food quality in the cafeteria have been successful according to the [Student Satisfaction Survey](#). Anecdotal evidence suggests students are happy with the revised meal plan policies, which allow for more flexibility by reducing the mandatory meal plan (with residence hall contract) from a full plan to a fifty-meal minimum which can be renewed. (This will be verified in the next Student Satisfaction Survey.) These rather "small" issues combined have a huge impact on the day-to-day life of the average UWest student.

Finally, student social opportunities have improved dramatically in the last two years. The Office of Student Life has organized dozens of on-campus activities and off-campus field trips. The former include events such as barbeques, movie nights, and wellness workshops. The latter include entertaining trips, e.g. to local amusement parks, educational outings to museums, and volunteer service trips to local shelters and food banks. These activities play an important role in meeting some of the [Institutional Learning Outcomes](#) (ILOs) more difficult to fulfill in a traditional classroom setting, such as areas relating to culture, nature, and service. How well these co-

curricular activities address this need will be assessed beginning in Fall 2012. UWest has also supported the expansion and operation of the Student Government. The government and student clubs serve not only to provide engaging activities but also to empower student leaders and fulfill UWest's Buddhist values of responsibility and compassion as manifest through service.

Balanced Budget

Every year since the University's founding, the Board of Trustees has approved the budget presented by the President and ensured uninterrupted funding of all academic, student affairs, and institutional support areas. Because of UWest's commitment to keeping tuition affordable and education accessible, the University cannot sustain itself through tuition payments alone. Its major sources of funding are through the charitable donations of Fo Guang Shan and its related institutions. These donations come from a large number of [contributors](#) not only locally but from across the world, who give sometimes in very large amounts and sometimes in very small ones. These contributions are from individual members, temples, and chapters of Fo Guang Shan, and, like contributions from alumni and university supporters of other institutions of higher learning, are quite apart from the major contributions given by Board of Trustees members. Moreover, by balancing the budget every year over the past 21 years, [Fo Guang Shan](#) has clearly demonstrated their reliability and commitment to the University's continued fiscal health. As a result, the University is debt-free and has an endowment of \$9.5 million²¹.

The University's budgeting procedures have been revised to make them more proactive, inclusive, and in line with procedures followed in most colleges and universities. This budget process and the frequent and periodic reports of year-to-date expenditures in each program will facilitate the use of the budget as a management tool by staff and faculty. The [2013/2014 budget planning process](#) will follow a new workflow. It will consist in a call for budget requests from all program directors and departmental chairs in the Fall, followed by a review by the President and CFO to determine financial feasibility and adjustment of requests. This document will be returned to the original budget submitters for their review, comments and requests, followed by a final review by the Budget Committee composed of the President, CFO, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs and the Special Advisor to the President. Final budgets will be compiled for submission to the Board of Trustees for approval and/or amendment. The entire workflow will feature frequent meetings, updates, transparency, and ongoing communication between all involved parties.²²

Revenue and Assets

Overall [revenue](#) in 2012/13 is predicted to be significantly lower than in 2011/12, only \$5.8 million compared to \$10.8 million. Revenue in 2010/11 (the most recent audited and finalized year) was similarly high, at \$9.4 million. This is largely due to unprecedented donations received during 2010/11 and 2011/12, over \$15.1 million in private grants and donations, including \$2.3 million raised for the [University's endowment](#). In 2012/13, although still vigorously fundraising, UWest is conservatively budgeting for only \$3.4 million in private grants and donations. Tuition revenue and sales are predicted to increase, some of which will be offset by a corresponding increase in financial aid to students. (Excluding the Lotus Scholarships, which are entirely donor funded.)

In 2012/13, UWest is budgeted to receive 27% (net after financial aid to students) of its revenue from tuition and fees, while 58% comes from private donations and grants. A small amount of income, 15%, is produced by the sales of educational services and auxiliary enterprises, such as certificate programs, residence halls, bookstore, and facilities rentals. Compared to last year, this is a significant increase in the proportion of revenue from tuition, which was only 17% in 2011/12. (This small percentage is largely due to higher than average private donations.) Tuition revenues are budgeted to increase 14%, from \$1.6 million in 2011/12 to \$1.8 million in 2012/13 (estimated).

²¹ Estimate as of June 2012. The last audited and finalized financial report for 2010/11 reports the endowment at \$9.4 million.

²² See budget timelines for the next five years in WASC Evidence/4-Resources/Budget Process.

Since 2007/8, UWest has managed to carefully [increase assets and decrease liabilities](#). Total assets have increased from \$19.8 million in 2007/8 to \$23.6 million in 2010/11. Total liabilities have decreased even more significantly, from \$3.1 million in 2007/8 to \$1.5 million in 2010/11. This has led to a steady increase in net assets from \$16.7 million in 2007/8 to \$22.1 million in 2010/11, an improvement of 33% in three short years. Finalized financial statements for 2011/12 (available in December 2012) are expected to show a continuation of this trend.

The largest portion of UWest's assets, 41%, is tied up in land and buildings, which are valued at close to \$10 million. A similar amount is found in UWest's investments, \$9.3 million or 40% of the University's assets. Cash accounts for another \$2.8 million or 12% of assets. Cash holdings have decreased significantly since 2007/8 (surplus year), while the value of UWest's investments has doubled. Most of UWest's assets, 56%, are unrestricted, giving UWest the flexibility it needs to grow in response to changing trends.

Physical Improvements

The University's related entity funding organization (the International Buddhist Progress Society, a branch of Fo Guang Shan) has purchased and remodeled a major facility, the UWest South Campus, located at 1000 San Gabriel Blvd in Rosemead, within walking distance (0.3 miles) of the main campus. The second floor of that building, 10,869 square feet, has been made available to the University as office space. Moving offices from the main campus to the south campus will open up much needed classroom space as the University continues to increase its enrollment. This building is currently under renovation by IBPS. Once complete, UWest will inspect the finished space and begin formulating plans for its use, including which offices may move and when. This generous provision of physical space is yet another demonstration of the dedication of UWest's funders to its continued development.

Additionally, UWest has completed the following physical improvements since December 2010:

- Opened a new bookstore/café on the main courtyard
- Built a full-sized outdoor basketball court (donor-funded)
- Upgraded classroom furniture and furniture in social areas, both indoors and outdoors
- Upgraded the recreation center and game room, including new weight lifting machines and flooring
- Installed new lighting and furniture in, and painted interior and exterior of the residence halls
- Installed new heating and air system in the library
- Replaced signage and placards around campus
- Planted over fifty new orange trees around campus
- Installed a reclaimed water irrigation system throughout campus

Results & Feedback

UWest is proud to report a 30% increase in [Fall 2012 enrollment](#). UWest welcomes the 149 new students who are on campus for the first time this fall. This is a 75% increase in new student enrollment over last year. Particularly noteworthy are the 54 new domestic students, many of whom are local to the Los Angeles area. In 2011, UWest only had two new students from the City of Los Angeles, compared to 23 this year. Other new students in Fall 2012 hail from the surrounding cities in the metropolitan area. As a result of the [Lotus Scholarships](#), 83 new students have been awarded financial support to attend UWest.

These new student numbers result from the increase in overall applications from 120 for Fall 2011 to 212 for Fall 2012, an increase of 77% in a single year. Although UWest was prepared for increased applications to be accompanied by lower conversion rates, [conversion](#) in fact remained fairly steady. UWest's conversion rate of applicants to enrolled students in 2011 was 70.8% with 68.1% for the three-year average. UWest's 2012 conversion rate of applicants to enrolled students remained high, at 70.2%, bringing the three-year average up to 68.8%. This is slightly higher than UWest's comparison cohort, which averages 63%²³.

²³ Most recent [IPEDs data](#) from 2010/11.

In addition to new students, UWest's [retention rates](#) have also improved steadily. The retention rate for first-time students attending in Fall 2009 who returned in Fall 2010 was 58.1%. This improved to 63.2% the following year and reached 75.0% this year²⁴. UWest hopes to continue this trend with a goal of reaching 80% in Fall 2013.

Despite these significant improvements, UWest is aware that the 6-year cohort [graduation rate](#) for first-time freshmen remains low, with a three year average of only 34%²⁵. Improving persistence and graduation is of paramount importance moving forward. This is one of the reasons for UWest's commitment to a student-centered mission-driven framework for decision-making.

The Student Government went from just seven members in 2010 to fourteen in 2012, and official student clubs expanded from six in 2010 to twelve in 2012. As a result, student activities on and off campus have shown a marked increase in frequency, variety, and attendance, as reflected in the [student activities calendar](#) and observational evidence of on-campus gatherings.

Feedback from the Student Satisfaction Survey and Room and Board Survey are more positive in 2012 than in previous years. All departments improved in most areas, with only a few showing mixed results and none regularly negative.²⁶ The biggest gains from 2011 to 2012 were in food variety (+25%) and quality (+14%), the Student Success Center (+15%), availability of financial aid information (+15%), timeliness of Bursar's transactions (+14%), and the bookstore (+13%). The areas which were rated lower and need improvement were internet speed (-16%), library computer quality (-13%), online security (-4%), printing and copying (-4%). Three other areas were rated just marginally lower than the year before, Wellness Center activities (-1%), Information Technology Office (-1%), and International Student Services (ISS) Office (-0.5%). Nonetheless, UWest is committed to improving in all areas, and is addressing these lower-rated services largely through major upgrades to UWest's information technology infrastructure and ongoing training for the new ISS Assistant.

Ongoing & Planned Actions

UWest created a Strategic Plan with four strategic priorities to pursue in the next five years. The strategic priorities are to 1) Increase Enrollment, 2) Improve Communication, 3) Grow Academically, and 4) Grow Financially. The [Action Report](#) presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2012 sets strategic priorities and initiatives in response to the December 2010 WASC Visiting Team Report and the March 2011 WASC Action Letter. More important, however, is the University's pursuit of strategic priorities that benefit the institution as a whole, beyond simply ensuring reaccreditation, and lead to the furtherance of the UWest mission.

Strategic Priority 1: Increase Enrollment

The [Enrollment Management Plan](#) contains detailed information on marketing, recruiting, and retention strategies. Marketing and recruiting strategies include the creation, implementation, assessment, and refinement of positioning strategies and outreach methods for various specific target markets. UWest is marketing itself based on its unique mission and brand as affordable, accessible, and accredited. Retention and persistence strategies include five priorities: 1) proper pricing and financial aid availability; 2) improving and expanding advising; 3) student integration into the college community; 4) engaging students in worthwhile projects and community service and; 5) integrating all retention efforts into UWest's mission. The Enrollment

²⁴ Tentative figure which will not be finalized until mid-September.

²⁵ It is worth noting that these calculations are very difficult to make due to the low number of traditional first-time freshmen who have historically enrolled at UWest, i.e. only 4 in 2004 and 2 in 2005. Students often enter UWest with at least some transfer credits which exclude them from classification as "first-time freshmen." While UWest is aware of its graduation rates, at this time they do not meet the minimum requirements of statistical significance using industry standard calculation methods. However, moving forward, UWest expects this to change and graduation rates will gain a new priority in decision-making processes.

²⁶ As rated on a 1 to 5 Likert scale with 5 being best and 1 being worst.

Management Team will continue to meet on a regular basis to oversee implementation, assessment, and refinement of the Enrollment Management Plan.

Strategic Priority 2: Improve Communication

As mentioned under Action Item 1, the Mission and Identity Committee (MIC) submitted a [Communication Report](#) to the administration in April 2012, which was subsequently endorsed and adopted by the Executive Cabinet. This report included an elucidation of the problems UWest faces with communication, a call to work together towards a system-wide solution, and concrete action steps to be implemented. These action steps include recommendations for improved shared governance, greater transparency, enhanced communication, better accountability and consistency in decision-making, community building, and executive support for UWest's leadership team. Many of these recommendations have already been implemented, as shown in the [update report](#) of June 2012. Some are long-term projects which the MIC will continue to monitor and pursue in collaboration with the Executive Cabinet and other committees and departments as necessary.

Strategic Priority 3: Grow Academically

The [Academic Plan](#) accounts for growth in full-time and part-time faculty and education support staff to support the increasing enrollments in each academic department over the next five years. It outlines the following hiring plan:

- 2012/13: 300 students
 - Buddhist Chaplaincy – 1 new full-time faculty (in addition to Rev. Gabriel who was hired full-time at the start of 2012/13)
- 2013/14: 350 students
 - Extended Studies – 1 new support staff
 - English as a Second Language – 1 new full-time faculty
- 2014/15: 400 students
 - Business – 1 new full-time faculty
 - Buddhist Chaplaincy – 1 new full-time faculty
 - General Education – 1 new full-time faculty
 - Registrar – 1 new support staff
- 2015/16: 450 students
 - Religious Studies – 1 new full-time faculty
 - Psychology – 1 new full-time faculty
- 2016/17: 500 students
 - Business – 1 new full-time faculty

This yields a total of nine new faculty members, a 56% increase, and two support staff over five years. A predicted 66% increase in students over this same period will still keep class sizes low (less than 12:1) while ensuring that fewer classes are cancelled due to under-enrollment. Departments will continuously hire adjuncts as needed. Course offerings at Claremont Lincoln University will supplement UWest's classes. Graduate assistants for use in teaching and research may also supplement staffing needs. Hiring plans will be reevaluated on an annual basis and adjusted as necessary depending on program enrollments and needs.

Furthermore, the Academic Plan outlines guidelines for selecting new faculty, growth in current academic and research initiatives, possible new areas for academic research and service, a growth plan for ESL (not accredited by WASC, but an important "feeder" program for UWest's academic departments), an external program review schedule, improved academic advising, pursuit of new academic partnerships (such as the [Claremont Consortium Agreement](#)), and assessment policies. The new assessment system (see Action Item 7: Assessment) will provide continuous process improvement and feedback for all academic programs and co-curricular activities to ensure educational effectiveness. The plan ensures academic quality and explores various possible growth avenues at the course and program level.

Strategic Priority 4: Grow Financially

As UWest grows academically, so will it grow financially. Tuition revenues will naturally increase as a factor of enrollment growth. However, UWest must also consider other funding sources. UWest will pursue a model which relies mostly on membership contributions, with grants and contracts assuming a less important role in the fundraising plan. Research on organizational fundraising success for small colleges such as UWest tells the story of board member dedication and significant board member contributions, both in terms of personal service as well as monetary contributions.

UWest has already formed a Board of Trustees able and willing to make significant contributions and to solicit others for contributions. It will continue to create the largest possible base of individual donors including UWest alumni, corporate donors, and foundation donors in addition to its current cadre of dedicated funders. In addition, as part of its commitment to the values of responsibility and compassion, UWest will seek to create the largest effective base of individual volunteers. It will formulate creative opportunities for fundraising events and augment these programs with grant funds.

In order to accomplish these goals, UWest will establish and maintain a Development Committee of the Board of Trustees. The University will also institute a program to identify, rate, evaluate, and prioritize prospects, especially those who have the ability to make major contributions both within the ranks of current support constituencies and from lists of prospective personal and business donors. UWest will identify donors who may be willing to underwrite specific UWest programs, professorships, physical plant improvements, etc., on a one-time or annual basis.

Leadership will play a critical role in efforts to plan, initiate, and produce an endowment campaign for UWest. This will include producing appropriate campaigns for annual giving, capital projects, etc. UWest must institute an aggressive communications program to maximize awareness of UWest's value to the larger Los Angeles basin area. The University must expand the recognition program for major donors and use recognition ceremonies as fundraising events. Finally, the University will set milestones for achievement of fundraising objectives. Ongoing review of goals and objectives by the budget team, Executive Cabinet, and Board of Trustees will help ensure UWest is able to respond with agility and flexibility to changing outcomes, needs, and goals.

Action Item 5: Academics

WASC’s Concerns

Action item 5 calls for an analysis of the efficacy of the current array of program offerings in view of enrollment and the need for qualified faculty for each program. Related to this is the need to address the inappropriate overlap of coursework at different levels, including the graduate and undergraduate levels. Documentation should include the current listing of programs and courses for each program along with faculty assigned to teach in each program; and minutes of meetings or reports analyzing the efficacy of the current offerings.

Page 3 of the Action Letter states:

The Commission urges UWest to develop sound policies concerning faculty, in keeping with the WASC Standards, and to address the questions raised here and in the team report about the extensive array of offerings and the implication of this model for instructional level, coherence of study, academic integrity, and faculty staffing roles. The planned staff and faculty retreats, described in your letter, provide an opportunity to begin addressing these concerns, to evaluate the efficacy of the current program offerings, to develop new, much-needed policies related to faculty.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Pages 3-4
WASC CPR Report	Pages 2, 3, 8, 9, 20, 23, and 24
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.7, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.12, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.11, 4.1, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8

UWest’s Concerns

At the time of the CPR Review, some UWest documentation used inconsistent nomenclature regarding degree programs (or “majors” in the undergraduate programs) and concentrations within such programs. As a result, the impression understandably arose that the University offered a large number of programs disproportionate to its size and capacity. While many of UWest’s degree programs offer various concentrations within the degree (e.g. the concentrations of Buddhist Studies and Comparative Religions within the master’s and doctoral programs in Religious Studies), those programs also have many shared core requirements and electives. For example, the 42-unit English B.A. major offers concentrations in Literature and Language. However, the shared requirements and electives within that program constitute up to 24 of those 42 units. This situation is similar in other programs with numerous concentrations. As a result, the array of offerings is not beyond the capacity of the University. Furthermore, UWest has taken care to ensure consistency in nomenclature in its published materials about degree programs and concentrations (see, for example, the [2012/2013 UWest Catalogue](#)).

UWest offers

- **Four undergraduate degrees:**
 - Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, English, General Studies²⁷, Psychology
- **Five master’s degrees:**
 - Master of Arts in Psychology, and in Religious Studies
 - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
 - Executive MBA
 - Master of Divinity in Buddhist Chaplaincy
- **One doctoral degree:**
 - Ph.D. in Religious Studies

²⁷ Formerly “undeclared major.”

Although the University felt that its course offerings were not beyond what it could sufficiently staff at the time, struggling enrollment growth was indeed a persistent issue and did make the feasibility of some programs questionable if low numbers were to continue. UWest recognized WASC's concern about the effect on academic integrity and coherence of the University trying to "spread its efforts too thin." As a result, over the past two years, University leadership has made increasing enrollment one of its top strategic priorities and has held off on introducing new departments or programs to UWest's array of offerings.

Implemented Actions

UWest has periodically reviewed and assessed the effectiveness and necessity of its degree programs based on the needs of students and society and based on enrollments. Thus, around the time of the CPR Review, the University had suspended several undergraduate programs, including the B.A. degree programs in History, Philosophy, Chinese, and Religious Studies, which significantly reduced the number of degree and course offerings and allowed the University to focus on its core programs. Plans to expand in other areas have also been on hold until enrollments become more stable, the Educational Effectiveness Review has been passed, and adequate research has been done to make sure that both mission alignment and market research are brought to bear on planning.

In addition to increasing enrollments, UWest's intent over the past two years has been to elaborate the academic rigor of current programs through the hiring of excellent additional faculty (see Action Item 6) and through the implementation of carefully conceived assessment practices (see Action Item 7). (Note that issues directly related to faculty are more thoroughly discussed in the next section of this report, Action Item 6: Faculty).

Evaluating the Efficacy of Current Program Offerings: Data-driven Decision-making

The University uses a number of measurements to gauge efficacy of program offerings. Program heads consult a variety of data as they evaluate program sustainability and effectiveness in order to make revisions and plan for the future. This process takes place yearly when the catalogue is being updated and when departments make their five-year plans and projections during the [budgeting process](#). It also informs the annual and five-year course and program effectiveness [review cycle](#).

The Institutional Research and Assessment Office (IRAO) gathers retention and graduation rate data, which program heads use to monitor and assess program effectiveness. UWest has developed and implemented relevant plans to continuously improve these rates (see the "Retention" section of the Enrollment Management Plan, p. 15ff). These plans are financially supported by the University's commitment to keeping tuition low and continuing private scholarships (p. 26-27). Departments also examine data provided by the IRAO on frequency of course offerings and course cancellations in order to make decisions on course elimination.

The 2012 iteration of the [Student Satisfaction Survey](#) showed positive responses by students on all academic-related items, indicating that current program offerings are meeting student and University needs. Open communication with the Student Government and the attendance of student representatives at various academic committees also enable students to express their wishes and interests in terms of course offerings.

Overlap of Coursework

Overlap of graduate and undergraduate coursework at the University has been addressed and eliminated in all departments. This is a concern that UWest has taken seriously and has monitored carefully since the WASC Visiting Team report of 2010. Indeed, the concern has been discussed in the Executive Cabinet, Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee, and University-wide Assessment Committee, and the Dean of Academic Affairs has advised program heads each semester to avoid overlap as much as possible in their course scheduling. Given UWest's small size, eliminating all overlap between graduate and undergraduate courses was a challenge, but the Dean and the program heads worked persistently to ensure that overlap was eliminated, largely by Fall 2011

and entirely by [Fall 2012](#). As enrollment numbers increase, this issue is unlikely to reappear. Furthermore, by instituting a [low course enrollment policy](#) (currently under review by the Academic Senate), the administration intends to ensure that adjunct faculty who teach required courses will receive regular contract pay when these courses are under-enrolled. This will ensure that students complete requirements in a timely manner and eliminate the pressure to combine different levels of classes, should it arise.

External Peer Review

All academic programs at UWest conduct periodic external peer reviews²⁸ during which small teams of professors and academic administrators from peer institutions examine program quality, program-mission alignment, appropriateness of levels, assessment plans, etc. The most recent ones took place during the year of the CPR Review, 2010. The recommendations from these reviews have since been studied and implemented as appropriate. Thus, some programs have made adjustments to provide for more cohesion among the course offerings. [General Education](#), for example, has added coursework in East/West philosophy, Eastern approaches to mind-body balance (yoga, tai chi, kung fu), and a service learning component (see Section 7: Assessment).

Review schedule for by program (source: [Academic Plan](#)).

Department	Most Recent	Next
Religious Studies Department	Fall 2010	Spring 2013
Business Department	Spring 2010	Spring 2013
Psychology Department	Fall 2010	Spring 2013
Buddhist Chaplaincy Department	Fall 2010 (with Rel. Studies)	Spring 2013
General Education Program	Fall 2010	Spring 2013
English Department	N/A	Spring 2014

Class Size

Class size plays an important role as an indicator of program efficacy. If classes are chronically under-enrolled, the University cannot offer enough courses to enable students to progress toward graduation in the normal time without resorting to class combinations and courses offered as independent studies, the former of which UWest has completely eliminated and the latter of which the University is reducing. If class size becomes very large across a program, students do not benefit from adequate attention from the faculty and get “lost in the shuffle.”

UWest’s enrollments are still low enough that professors can easily know all their students by name and take time to help them with any questions they might have. However, the University recognizes that the targeted increase in enrollment must go hand-in-hand with increased hiring of both faculty and support staff in order for UWest to continue to attract students based on low student to teacher ratios.

Data on average class sizes are gathered and reviewed periodically as a measure of program efficacy. This aids UWest in verifying where high enrollments warrant an increase in personnel or where low enrollments require careful review and, for example, either increased investment in marketing or suspension of the program. An increase in average class size also led to the hiring of an additional full-time faculty member in the Buddhist Chaplaincy program, and according to the projections for that program, an additional full-time professor will need to be hired in the near future.

Over the past year, average class size institution-wide has increased from 7.6 to 10 students (10.4 for undergraduate and 9.7 for graduate). While this constitutes a 31% increase in average class size, given the still very small numbers overall, this is not an area for concern. However, as UWest follows its plan to increase

²⁸ See External Peer Review Reports for academic programs in WASC Evidence/5-Academics/Peer Reviews.

enrollment steadily over the next five years, administrators will continue to monitor these data carefully so that hiring of faculty and staff supports growth, and average class size continues to remain below that of [comparison cohort](#) institutions such as Whittier College (avg. class size 19) or the University of La Verne (16).

Integrated Learning Outcomes

As part of the University's comprehensive reformulation of learning outcomes at all levels, new [Program Learning Outcomes](#)²⁹ (PLOs) were created for all programs to better align them with the mission and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Faculty have created measurable Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)³⁰ for all courses offered in order to more systematically assess student learning and course alignment with program goals (see Action Item 7: Assessment). This ongoing, data-driven review system will serve program heads and deans as a useful tool in determining the appropriateness of coursework in the various programs as well as program effectiveness overall.

Program Revision

During the development of integrated learning outcomes at the institutional, program and course level, academic and co-curricular programs have already made adjustments in order to make their offerings more mission-focused and more appropriate to student needs. For example, the General Studies program has developed specific concentrations that utilize courses already offered under the various majors (Business Administration, Psychology, English). The Psychology Department has revised its curriculum so that it accords with standards set by the American Psychology Association's guidelines for undergraduate programs. Psychology has also expanded its master's degree curriculum to meet the pre-requirements for the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) license. The Religious Studies Department has examined and adjusted some prerequisites in order to provide increased flexibility for students and has added course work in *Buddhism in the U.S.* (REL 659) and a dissertation proposal seminar (REL 698). Religious Studies is also now offering *Introduction to Buddhist Contemplative Studies* (REL 406) in response to student interest. The English B.A. Program has eliminated certain generic courses and replaced them with courses that are more closely aligned with UWest's mission, such as *Buddhism in American Literature* (ENGL 427) and *Introducing the Beat Generation: Beatitudes to Buddhism* (ENGL 428). Within the next academic year, the English program intends to offer a concentration in Buddhism in American literature as well as one in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

²⁹ PLOs and rubrics can be seen for each program in WASC Evidence/5-Academics/Program Learning Outcomes Rubrics.

³⁰ CLOs and rubrics for all classes offered in Fall 2012 can be viewed in WASC Evidence/7-Assessment/Course Learning Outcomes.

Qualified Faculty for All Programs

By hiring seven new faculty members over the past two years, the University has responded to the need for more full-time faculty in all of its programs. The following hires have been completed since the December 2010 WASC Visiting Team's Report:

Program	New Full-Time Tenure Track Faculty	New Full-Time NON-Tenure Track Faculty	Total Full Time Faculty
Business Administration	1	1	4
Psychology	0	1	2
Religious Studies	1	1	6
Buddhist Chaplaincy	0	1	2
English	0	1	1

In addition, the General Education Coordinator position was elevated to full-time in 2011. In sum, UWest now has sixteen full-time faculty members. Eleven more adjuncts have also been hired across the various programs.

The UWest [full-time and adjunct faculty](#) are all very well qualified, with the majority of full-time professors holding terminal degrees in their respective fields. Of the sixteen full-time faculty, twelve hold doctoral degrees. The remaining four have master's degrees³¹. Only three adjunct faculty members hold pre-graduate degrees only. These instructors, however, are highly qualified in their teaching subjects of film, yoga, and developmental math, respectively. Further issues regarding UWest faculty, including faculty staffing roles, faculty policies, and faculty development are found in the next section of this report, Action Item 6: Faculty.

Results & Feedback

UWest has made significant progress in its academic programs and practices since the 2010 CPR Visit. The plans, policies, and procedures outlined in the Academic Plan allow for significant progress on academic programs and practices over the course of the next five years.

Moreover, new faculty hires have already worked diligently to effect positive changes in their departments. The new Religious Studies Department Chair has revamped the orientation and advising processes for students in that department and set up a September retreat wherein department faculty will review and revise the department's entire curriculum. The new Business Department faculty have added much needed strength in the areas of finance and marketing/management. The new English Department Coordinator has introduced a TESOL certification program, revamped the affiliated ESL program and the testing procedures for entering students, and hired a Lead Faculty to help with ESL and the transition of ESL or "bridge" students into academic programs. The General Education Coordinator has been able to revise the program's learning outcomes and make significant improvements to student advising. And new faculty in the Psychology and Buddhist Chaplaincy Departments have provided relief to overburdened chairs who were, as WASC noted in its 2010 report, assuming too much responsibility for department management and student advising.

Other major tangible results in the area of Academics include:

- The cadre of full-time faculty has increased from nine at the time of the last WASC Visit to sixteen. This constitutes a significant step toward providing sufficient faculty to meet teaching and advising needs.

³¹ See also the faculty lists on pp. 148-150 of the [2012/2013 Catalogue](#), as well as full-time faculty curriculum vitae in WASC Evidence/6-Faculty/UWest Full-Time Faculty CVs.

Plans for additional hiring aim to further increase full-time faculty in order to maintain UWest's very competitive low student to professor ratio (see next Action Item).

- Thanks to the hiring of additional full-time faculty, the percentage of full-time faculty among faculty as a whole is 34% in Fall 2012 (see [Faculty Report](#)).
- Overlap of coursework at the undergraduate and graduate levels has been eliminated.
- Programs have revised their course offerings to better align them with mission and institutional goals, provide skills and qualifications relevant to the working world, and respond to student interests and needs.
- Students largely express satisfaction with program offerings and quality of professors per the 2012 Student Satisfaction Survey and course evaluations.
- Improved institutional research infrastructure allows for data-driven program revision and other academic planning and decision-making.

Ongoing & Planned Actions

Planning for Growth

UWest's [Academic Plan](#) describes how the University will increase its faculty and educational support staff in coordination with anticipated student enrollment growth in each department. The need for new faculty and staff is determined according to a five-year plan that is adjusted each year with shifts in enrollment, new programs, emphases or directions, and other factors.

The University has already met its target to reach an enrollment of 300 students by Fall 2012 and projects sustained growth of 50 students per year until 2017, or a total enrollment of approximately 500 students in five years' time (see [Action Report](#) and [Enrollment Management Plan](#)). Plans are in place to hire additional full-time as well as adjunct faculty in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years in all programs. The total number of projected new hires in Academic Affairs between 2012 and 2017 is: nine new full-time faculty members and two support staff (Extended Studies, Registrar).

In addition to the planned increase in faculty, a number of academic programs are ready to launch graduate assistantship positions (Psychology, Buddhist Chaplaincy, Religious Studies) in the current semester. These plans respond to students' calls to the University to make such vital positions available as a means for them to gather practical experience in teaching, research, and mentoring. As enrollments grow, additional graduate assistantships will be made available in other programs to address staffing needs.

Enrollment growth will also allow the University to utilize more flexible scheduling that will accommodate the needs of faculty and students. Many of the issues that have constrained UWest's academic programs in the past will dissipate if growth is sustained.

UWest is awaiting reaffirmation of accreditation and continued growth in enrollment before pursuing any new programs -- though careful thinking about new directions is already taking place. When that stage has been reached, leadership will consider, among other things, the development of a new Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, something that is consonant with UWest's mission and identity.

“Future Academic Plans and Possibilities” in the [Academic Plan](#) include:

- B.A. English TESOL concentration: An 18-unit concentration in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. This would complement the existing concentrations in Literature and Language. The English Department intends to add this concentration in 2013 as part of its effort to make the undergraduate program in English more attractive by making it more professionally oriented.
- M.A. TESOL (Requires sub change proposal)
- M.A. in Buddhism and American Literature (Requires sub change proposal)
- Co-taught interdisciplinary courses: Preliminarily, this might involve the confluence of Literature and Religion courses, for example.
- Doctoral program in Management: The Business Department has long considered this possibility and has drafted a proposal. This involves a substantive change proposal post reaffirmation of accreditation.
- A new Department of Asian Languages and Cultures

Action Item 6: Faculty

WASC's Concerns

Action Item 6 concerns the adoption and implementation of fair and equitable faculty policies and procedures concerning qualifications, hiring procedures, workload, retention and advancement, scholarship and creative activity, and professional development.

Page 3 of the Action Letter states:

The team found that there are not a sufficient number of faculty members to “adequately serve departments and to provide curricular assessment and growth as well as appropriately manage academic governance.” [per the WASC CPR Report] The Commission shares the team’s concerns about the lack of criteria for hiring; the need for fair and equitable policies on workload, advancement, scholarship and creative activity; and support for faculty development, which are critical elements of building a core of committed faculty members.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Pages 3-4
WASC CPR Report	Pages 9, 15, 23, 24, 26-29, 32, and 36
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.8, 2.9, 2.12, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.11, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6

UWest's Concerns

The University appreciates the need for both additional full-time faculty as well as the formalization of faculty policies that reflect best practices in higher education. In order to provide quality programs and fulfill UWest's educational mission and promise to its students, the University must equally commit to its growing cadre of outstanding faculty. Otherwise, it will not be able to retain them.

Implemented Actions

Sufficient Faculty

UWest has made several additions to the full-time faculty during the past two years (seven altogether, see Action Item 5: Academics, above), raising the [total number](#) from twelve in Spring 2012 to sixteen in Fall 2012. During the same time, the [number of adjunct faculty](#) has increased from 27 in Spring 2012 to 37 in Fall 2012. Because of a concomitant increase in student numbers, the [faculty to student ratio](#) has remained stable over the past three semesters. Combined faculty ranks make for a 5 : 1 student : faculty ratio, which is substantially lower than the ratios at the WASC-accredited institutions UWest examined in its [comparison cohort](#). These significant increases in faculty along with the well-specified plan to hire additional faculty over the next five years ([Academic Plan](#)) indicate that the University has taken appropriate steps to address the sufficiency of faculty in order to adequately serve teaching, advising, and assessment needs. Resources are being dedicated to faculty hiring, and departments have mapped out plans to hire additional faculty according to their projected growth.

Each year academic departments have the opportunity to identify needs for new program faculty as part of the [budget process](#). The Dean of Academic Affairs addresses those needs with the Budget Committee, which considers all departmental requests and the justifications for those requests. In addition, the Dean of Academic Affairs surveyed all department chairs in spring 2012 about their needs for faculty for the years 2012-2013 to 2016-2017 and incorporated those data in the [Academic Plan](#). Students also have expressed their interests in additional faculty through their representatives on the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (APCC) and the Student Government.

UWest's professors are talented individuals who are motivated to carry out appropriate teaching, research, and service responsibilities. Though comparatively small in numbers they represent an [impressive variety](#) of ethnic,

cultural, linguistic, religious, and professional backgrounds. What they all have in common, however, is [excellent educational backgrounds and credentials](#) as well as many years of relevant teaching experience.

At present, of the sixteen full-time faculty³², twelve hold doctoral degrees, many from prestigious universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, UCLA, and UC Berkeley, among others. Of the four full-time professors who hold master's degrees, two are pursuing doctoral degrees. Another is a Business Administration professor who holds an MBA degree and has abundant practical experience essential to that department. The fourth is UWest's English Department coordinator, who holds degrees from UCLA and the University of Edinburgh and is currently completing a second master's degree at the University of British Columbia.

UWest's adjunct professors are also hired based on their [excellent educational credentials](#) and relevant professional background. They have earned degrees (many of them at the doctoral level) from top-tier universities in the U.S. and around the world. It is also worth noting that a large number of the University's adjunct faculty have been teaching courses for UWest for many years. Adjuncts are included in departmental meetings and are encouraged to attend many of the University's committees. Altogether, the University feels confident that its current highly qualified sixteen full-time faculty combined with its committed group of adjuncts meet the needs of a student population of about 300 students.

Faculty Policies

New faculty policies have been developed through several means: the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee³³, which considers new policies or changes to existing policies; the University Cabinet, which includes department chairs and program coordinators as members; and the Executive Cabinet, which considered and revised faculty workload issues in 2011, published in the [Faculty Handbook](#), so that workload was more consistent with practices at comparable universities. Furthermore, policies related to faculty salary have been carefully considered by the Budget Committee, the President, and the Board of Trustees, resulting in substantial faculty salary increases for 2012-2013 (see Action Item 4: Resources).

Faculty Hiring Policy

The Dean of Academic Affairs, with input from department chairs, developed a thorough guideline for faculty hiring (see [Academic Plan](#)); it includes a step-by-step process outline for faculty search committees as well as a year-by-year plan for hiring in each department. In addition, the University recently adopted a [Faculty Recruitment Policy](#), which lays out parallel steps. Prior to each search, departments identify their specific needs for the new hire and work to develop a position announcement, which formulates the criteria that are essential to the position as well as the qualifications sought in candidates. The qualifications of faculty members are clearly defined in search ads and job descriptions and conform to what is usual at other universities in the U.S. Search criteria also include the suitability of candidates in terms of the UWest mission.

Faculty Workload

Full-time faculty workload was adjusted in 2011 from 4/4, four courses in the fall and spring semesters, to 3/3, three in each semester. This adjustment was based on a systematic examination of workload policies at comparable universities. Also, faculty required office hours were reduced from 10 to 6 hours per week, again making UWest's practices more consistent with those at comparable universities. Faculty with administrative duties, such as chairs and program coordinators, receive additional course load reductions. Moreover, the University's practice allows chairs to reduce their faculty member's teaching requirements when, for example, their research and publication activities are in an intense phase.

Tenure and Promotion Policies

At the time of the writing of this report, the first three faculty members hired onto tenure track are close to completing their four-year tenure review cycle. The Tenure Review Committee has completed its evaluation of

³² WASC Evidence/6-Faculty/UWest Full-time Faculty CVs

³³ WASC Evidence/5-Academics/APCC Meeting Minutes, with subfolders by date

these candidates and sent their recommendation to the President. Updated policies on advancement are currently in process as well. The Dean of Academic Affairs has submitted a new [Tenure and Promotion Policy](#), which will be reviewed by the Academic Senate, the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee, and the Cabinet. The new plan, which provides for a five-year tenure review cycle, will be in place by the time the Visiting Team arrives in October. In addition to the three faculty under tenure review, four of the new faculty hires are on tenure track.

Retaining Faculty

In the 2012/2013 academic year, the University has provided salary increases for all full-time faculty, ranging anywhere between 2% and 26%. The wide range of salary increases reflects the fact that some junior faculty members received a rather substantial increase in an effort to, over the course of two years, bring them to the median pay line of comparable schools—a goal that has the full support of the Board of Trustees.

In May 2012, UWest began to offer all full-time faculty and staff members a 403(b) retirement benefit. The benefit consists of before-tax contributions, catch-up provisions, rollover contributions, employer match and a vesting schedule. The current maximum matching rate is 2% for those employees who contribute 2% or more to the fund. While still modest, the University is demonstrating with the introduction of this benefit and its ongoing efforts to find the best possible health insurance benefits it can afford that UWest is committed to investing in and retaining its faculty members. Moreover, improving quality of life for faculty and staff alike is concordant with the University's values of peace, harmony, compassion, responsibility, and excellence.

Scholarship and Creative Activity

Policies on scholarship and creative activity are expressed in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and in the University's [Action Report](#). All faculty are expected to engage in scholarship, as well as in teaching and service, as articulated by the [Strategic Directions](#) document developed in 2010, which set out a [Teacher/Scholar/Servant leader model](#) for faculty. That model has been elaborated by the Dean of Academic Affairs in the [Teaching Scholarship Service Model](#) currently under review by the Academic Senate, APCC, and Cabinet. It should be noted, too, that all full-time faculty are required to submit annual updates to their teaching, scholarship, and service via the [Teacher/Scholar/Service Survey](#), which was implemented by the Dean of Academic Affairs in 2010 and last administered in Spring 2012. Results from that survey show that already the majority of full-time faculty are engaged in research and publication in their fields of expertise.

Faculty Development

In response to the 2010 CPR Team's recommendations, the President's Cabinet agreed that retreats or information-sharing seminars for faculty and staff should take place at least once a semester. The first such gathering was the [Mission and Identity Workshop](#) conducted during the Spring 2011. Subsequent meetings of this nature have been used to inform the campus community of the WASC Action Items and the progress the University is making in addressing each one. In Summer 2012, President Wu hosted a [half-day session](#) and catered luncheon to [celebrate](#) the sharp increase in student applications and give credit to the various teams and individuals who had been working hard to implement UWest's student-centered, mission-driven approach to improvement.

UWest's [Faculty and Professional Development website](#)³⁴ was also created in 2011 and is frequently updated with resources and information on teaching, research, writing, and the UWest mission. Faculty Development workshops have been held on CLO and rubric development³⁵. The [2012/2013 budget](#) contains increased funding for faculty research (See Action Item 4: Resources). Moreover, in 2012/13 the University is implementing a Faculty Development Workshops series. Fall 2012 workshops will feature "Contemplative Education" (Dr. Chu), "Inter-Cultural Understanding" (Ms. Tadesse), and "Using TaskStream Effectively" (Mr. Oertel). In addition,

³⁴ <http://fpd.uwestonline.com/>

³⁵ Videos available at: <http://fpd.uwestonline.com/course-learning-outcomes-explained/>

library workshops on finding resources for research and on the effective use of technology will be offered for faculty as well as for students.

Results & Feedback

As detailed in the previous Action Item, new faculty hires have already worked diligently to effect positive changes in their departments.

The outdated [Faculty Handbook](#) has been revised, and the Academic Senate is now more involved in reviewing and proposing faculty-related policies and procedures. A number of vital policies have been introduced that work together to manage faculty workload and promote scholarship and professional development. UWest is in the process of approving updated [tenure policies](#). A [Teaching, Scholarship, Service Model](#) that reflects the University's mission and values has been articulated for all full-time faculty.

The process of creating and implementing program- and course-level learning outcomes aligned with the institutional outcomes and the University mission, has been instrumental in helping faculty understand how academic freedom and the need for rigorous assessment can – and must – work hand-in-hand to create more effective education. While there was initially some faculty consternation about the assessment process, which was perceived as potentially impeding academic freedom, most of the challenges have been surmounted. Faculty have gained a clearer understanding that they personally control the assessment process for their courses and that rigorous assessment makes their courses more effective and more educationally sound. The details of this new assessment process are presented in the next section, Action Item 7: Assessment.

Ongoing & Planned Actions

While UWest has made strides in offering fair salaries for faculty, particularly with increases implemented for the 2012-2013 year, continued improvement is essential for the University to become and remain a competitive employer. This and related issues such as the benefits plan are areas that the University and Board of Trustees need to examine carefully going forward. UWest is committed to putting policies and resource in place that will enable the institution to successfully recruit and retain excellent faculty.

The recruitment of additional full-time faculty and support staff has been well mapped out for the next five years in the [Academic Plan](#). However, should enrollment increase faster than expected, the hiring plan will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Finally, the University recognizes that faculty development is still in its initial stages. UWest intends to increase investment in that area over the next five years and to continue to increase its support for faculty research as well.

Action Item 7: Assessment

WASC's Concerns

Action Item 7 requires the development of the infrastructure of assessment of student learning, including measurable learning outcomes at the course, program, and institution level, assessment plans that include direct methods for assessing student learning and tools that promote good assessment practices, and development of the faculty's capacity to assess and improve student learning. Refinement of general education outcomes is also expected.

Page 4 of the letter states:

Measurable, well-framed student learning outcomes need to be developed and adopted by the faculty at the program, course, and, where appropriate, institutional level. The EER team will expect to see that direct measures for assessing student learning have been implemented along with tools that promote good assessment practice, such as faculty-developed rubrics. Processes for assessing co-curricular programs should be adopted... The general education component of the undergraduate program needs to be evaluated and refined in light of the mission of the institution, with clearly stated outcomes and a process for assessing learning. The EER team will expect to be presented with completed program reviews and results of assessment that demonstrate the level of student learning and show steps taken to improve learning.

Source	Reference
Action Letter	Pages 3-4
WASC CPR Report	Pages 5, 9, 20-23, 25, and 36
Accreditation Handbook	CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 3.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8

UWest's Concerns

Revision of Learning Outcomes

Prior to the 2010 CPR Visit, UWest had developed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at the course and program level in all degree programs. The CPR review and subsequent WASC recommendations were helpful in focusing the University's attention on the need to express outcomes at all levels that are clearly linked to mission. Efforts to revise and integrate learning outcomes coincided with the University's thorough search for a comprehensive assessment technology system. This was fortuitous as UWest was able to search for a system that best suited its plan to measure outcomes from the course through the program to the institutional level in all academic programs as well as evaluate the learning outcomes of the co-curricular programs.

Assessment Infrastructure

At the time of the CPR Review, UWest had the following structures in place for the purpose of learning assessment. Over the last two years, their work and interaction with one another has intensified.

The Institutional Research and Assessment Office (**IRAO**) handles the daily operation and management of UWest's assessment-related matters. Currently staffed by a full-time [Assistant IRAO Officer](#) and several student workers, who are gaining valuable experience and training in data collection and analysis, the IRAO is responsible for implementing the University's assessment policies. It is dedicated to:

- Managing the University's assessment system (TaskStream, see below) and assisting faculty and students with its use
- Conducting and analyzing surveys and course teaching evaluations
- Conducting institutional research projects (e.g. FTE calculation, student retention rates, graduation rates, class size over years, frequency of course offering and cancellation, etc.)

In Spring 2009, UWest [established the UWAC](#) (University-Wide Assessment Committee)³⁶, chaired by the Assistant Dean of Academic Assessment. Its members include the deans, department chairs, program coordinators, student life director, librarian, registrar, IRAO officer, and a student government representative. The UWAC meets monthly. Its charge, *inter alia*, is to:

- Develop policies and procedures for student learning assessment
- Promote an evidence-based culture
- Review and approve institutional and program learning outcomes and assessment rubrics³⁷
- Review and approve survey questionnaires, and review and discuss their results
- Collect and analyze data on student learning
- Disseminate student learning data to the relevant program units and administrative offices
- Assist in using the data to improve programs and services

The Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (APCC)³⁸ is a long-standing committee, in existence at UWest since before initial accreditation. This committee is chaired by the Dean of Academic Affairs and attended by full-time and adjunct faculty. It meets monthly, and its assessment-related authority includes:

- Review and approval of Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes
- Review and approval of University-wide curricular assessment policies and procedures
- Review and discussion of UWAC-referred issues relating to curricular assessment

The APCC also reviews and approves all new course outlines after they have been vetted at the program level (i.e. at departmental meetings). Since Spring 2012, APCC policy requires that all [new course outlines](#) be submitted for review with their CLOs and rubrics.

Implemented Actions

Mission-Driven Learning Outcomes

As described under Action Item 1: Mission, early in 2011 UWest undertook a careful examination of its mission and identity and formulated a set of Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and [assessment rubrics](#) under the four themes of Wisdom and Skillful Means, Self-Awareness, Liberation, and Interdependence. Subsequently each academic program developed Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and assessment rubrics³⁹ by the end of that same year. Academic program heads, with the support of the IRAO, then collaborated with full-time faculty to develop measurable course learning outcomes⁴⁰ for one course each in the Spring 2012 semester. During this pilot round of CLO assessment, twelve courses were assessed using the newly acquired TaskStream system.

TaskStream

[TaskStream](#)⁴¹ is a company that provides web-based software and support services to plan and manage educational assessment processes. In searching for the appropriate assessment technology, a search committee chaired by the Assistant Dean of Academic Assessment, [Dr. Bill Chen](#), was formed. The committee included members from the UWAC, including deans, chairs/heads, the IT Director, and the Institutional Research Officer. The committee attended presentations by the different vendors and dialogued with them about UWest's needs. In all, this committee evaluated [four different vendors](#) and, after a thorough process, chose TaskStream, largely because it can accommodate multiple-level assessment and is very flexible. It is also user friendly and

³⁶ WASC Evidence /7-Assessment/UWAC Meeting Minutes 2009-2012, with subfolders by date

³⁷ Learning outcomes at the program and course level are developed by faculty and reviewed and first approved by the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (APCC).

³⁸ WASC Evidence/5-Academics/APCC Meeting Minutes 2010-2012

³⁹ WASC Evidence/5 -Academics/Program Learning Outcomes, subfolders for Graduate and Undergraduate programs

⁴⁰ WASC Evidence/7- Assessment/Course Learning Outcomes, with subfolders by academic department

⁴¹ For more information, see the company's website at www.taskstream.com

reasonably priced. The list of universities using TaskStream includes Chapman University, National University, Azusa Pacific, CSU Bakersfield, University of San Diego, and George Washington University, to name a few.

The “cloud-based” system offers two parts, an Accountability Management System (AMS) and Learning Assessment Tools (LAT), which can function separately or together. UWest purchased and has implemented both systems. The University’s investment in this system is \$21,275 to purchase, and approximately \$22,000 in yearly fees.⁴²

TaskStream’s technology provides UWest the tools to, among other things:

- Document, organize and manage assessment processes
- Develop and manage e-portfolios
- Manage internships
- Foster a data-driven culture of assessment and program improvement

Students also benefit from the system as it allows them, among other things, to:

- See what is expected of them during their program
- Keep track of assignments and due dates
- Look back on work they have done and reflect on goals and progress toward them
- Create showcases of their work, portfolios, etc. for future schools and employers

Additionally, TaskStream is easy to use and does not require the installation of special hardware or software. Students upload their work, such as papers, PowerPoint presentations, audio and video recordings and other types of direct evidence of student learning into their folders in a given class. Instructors then evaluate that work according to the faculty-developed course learning outcome rubrics. The evaluations are released to students, who can see how their work is being assessed and request additional feedback. Moreover, because UWest’s learning outcomes are integrated at all levels, the TaskStream system automatically maps the course-level assessment results up to the relevant program level and, ultimately, to the institutional level.

In the Fall 2012 semester, UWest has upgraded its TaskStream modalities so that work uploaded into TaskStream is now automatically submitted to Turnitin.com. This is a benefit for the institution as it can now better ensure that student work in all classes is being vetted for original authorship and that academic integrity is being upheld. It also constitutes a timesaver for students, who no longer have to upload their work into two different systems. Instructors, likewise, now receive the Turnitin.com reports via the assessment system. It should be noted, however, that assessment still rests solely in the hands of the faculty as the systems themselves simply organize and display the artifacts, rubrics, and originality reports, all of which the instructor interprets and evaluates.

University-wide Assessment

During the Fall 2011 semester, the Institutional Research and Assessment Office held faculty development workshops⁴³ for full-time and adjunct faculty to ensure understanding of the new CLO system and TaskStream software, and to assist instructors in developing assessment rubrics. Thanks to the CLO assessment trials in Spring 2012, full-time faculty had already developed CLOs and rubrics for one of their courses and completed the assessment. This gave the instructors and program heads the opportunity to see what was more and less effective before moving to implementation in all courses. During the first half of 2012, department heads then worked with adjunct faculty to develop CLOs for their Fall 2012 courses. As a result, the University has been able to stay on track with its ambitious plan for course learning outcomes assessment in virtually all courses offered⁴⁴, beginning in the Fall 2012 semester.

⁴² Subject to fluctuation with enrollment as some fees are assessed on a per student basis.

⁴³ Videos available at: <http://fpd.uwestonline.com/course-learning-outcomes-explained/>

⁴⁴ WASC Evidence/7-Assessment/Course Learning Outcomes, with subfolders by academic department

General Education Assessment

As part of the University-wide creation of mission-driven learning outcomes, UWest's General Education Program developed a new set of measurable [General Education Program Learning Outcomes](#) that map to the ILOs and the mission. In the Spring 2012 pilot phase of CLO assessment, the program developed CLOs and evaluation rubrics for two courses, *Dimensions of Religion* and *Oral Communication*. By Fall 2012, sixteen GE courses have CLOs⁴⁵ in place that map to the GE Program and the institutional level. All of these courses are currently being assessed via the TaskStream system. And, as in all academic programs, a preponderance of the data being used to assess these learning outcomes is derived from direct evidence. By the end of the Spring 2013 semester, CLOs will be in place for the majority of courses offered through the General Education Program.

The General Education Program is inherently different from other academic programs in that it covers a wide variety of fields of study as well as foundational courses in oral and written communication, mathematics, and critical thinking. Often, a student may only take one or two courses in a given discipline such as sociology, art, or philosophy. As a result, the GE program-level outcomes for the various disciplines (under ILO No. 1) are quite broadly worded. It is at the course level where these outcomes are refined to ensure that students are acquiring knowledge and skills commensurate with a general education in those fields. At the same time, all General Education courses, where appropriate, are applying the same outcomes and rubrics to foundational skills and practices such as communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and academic integrity so that consistency of measurement is guaranteed and the University can track these essential skills program-wide. Below is the example of the PLO and rubric for Information Literacy, which are derived from the standards for information literacy competency developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)⁴⁶:

GE PLO <u>Information Literacy</u>	1 = Poor		3 = Passing		5 = Ideal
Students are able to determine nature and extent of information needed, access information effectively and efficiently, evaluate information and its sources critically, and access and uses information ethically and legally.	Unable to determine what information is needed, how to access it, evaluate it critically, or use it ethically and legally.	Able to determine at a basic level what information is needed and how to access it. Ability to evaluate information and its sources critically and to use it ethically and legally is fragmentary.	Able to determine what information is needed and to access it effectively and use it legally. Attempts to evaluate information and its sources critically but is not always successful.	Effectively, efficiently, and accurately finds and uses information. Is able to evaluate information and its sources critically most of the time. Adheres to ethical and legal principles of information use.	Meets highest standards of information literacy and demonstrates creativity in finding and using information excellently suited to the purpose at hand. Highly sensitive to ethical and legal issues of information use.

⁴⁵ WASC Evidence Folder/7 – Assessment/Course Learning Outcomes/General Education Syllabi

⁴⁶ See <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency#ilassess>

GE External Peer Review and Program Improvement

In November 2010, shortly before the CPR Visit, UWest's General Education program was peer-reviewed by a highly qualified 2-person team from the University of La Verne. Their [review](#) made a number of sound recommendations regarding ways for GE to incorporate more of UWest's mission of whole-person education into its offerings. At the time of the CPR Visit, the GE Coordinator had only been able to formulate [a written response](#) to these recommendations. Since then, the program has had time to implement changes and has added the following offerings and requirements to the General Education Program:

- A course in the expressive arts that integrates the topic of social justice (*ART 301 [Art as Activism, sample of student work by Lin Li](#)*)
- A Wellness component requirement (two 1-unit courses, beginning with [WELL 100 Yoga for Body and Mind](#) in Fall 2012)
- A [Service Learning course](#), required of all entering undergraduates in their first two semesters (to be piloted in Spring 2013)
- A practical, comparative course in philosophy East/West ([PHIL 200 Philosophy as a Guide to Living](#))

All of these additions to the GE Program connect the learning experience more directly with the University's mission to educate the whole person, facilitate understanding between East and West, and cultivate well-balanced, compassionate members of society. Thanks to the recent significant growth in undergraduate enrollment, the GE Program looks forward to implementing more of the peer reviewers' recommendations. Another external peer review is scheduled for Spring 2013, per the [Academic Plan](#). Finally, the General Education Program, like other academic programs and student services offices, has developed a [retention plan](#) for 2012/13 to help focus its energies and resources on strategies that will improve instruction and advisement.

Co-Curricular Assessment

UWest sees its [co-curricular activities and events](#) as a vital part of whole-person education, serving to bring the diverse student body together and introducing many students to worlds beyond the campus. These programs fulfill important student learning outcomes.

Once UWest had established the Institutional Learning Outcomes and learning outcomes in all academic programs, a [Co-Curricular Task Force](#) was created as a break-out group from the Mission and Identity Committee. This group worked together under the advisement of the Academic Dean and Psychology and Chaplaincy faculty to develop measurable learning outcomes for UWest's co-curricular programs, the UWest Co-Curricular Program Learning Outcomes ([CCPLOs](#)). These outcomes were designed to align with UWest mission and ILOs as well as the "Six Dimensions of Wellness Model" developed by Dr. Bill Hettler, commonly used by universities and colleges to measure student wellness. The resulting outcomes and rubrics were then reviewed and endorsed by major University constituencies (Cabinet, APCC, UWAC, Student Government). Like the academic learning outcomes, the CCPLOs are assessable via the TaskStream system.

The overall goal of co-curricular assessment is to ensure that UWest's co-curricular programs, such as Student Life, the Wellness Center, Student Success Center, Residential Life, and the Student Government, are 1) fulfilling the mission of the University and 2) comparable to and competitive with the offerings of peer institutions.

UWest has two strategic goals for co-curricular assessment within the next five years. First, the University will complete an [assessment test phase during](#) the 2012/13 academic year. This test phase will include the Fall 2012 [New Student Orientation](#) as well as two Student Life activities per semester, and the activities of one or two cooperating student clubs (e.g. the Kung Fu Club). Second, UWest will implement comprehensive co-curricular assessment by the 2017/18 academic year. Because co-curricular activities are different from academic courses, which quite naturally provide much direct assessment data, they must be assessed differently. Therefore, UWest has allowed for a longer implementation period for co-curricular assessment than for curricular assessment.

According to what the University-Wide Assessment Committee has learned from looking at other institutions, most co-curricular programs are assessed through indirect evidence; nonetheless, methods for collection of

direct evidence will remain a priority. The University continues to examine its co-curricular programs to see where such direct evidence can be generated while maintaining student interest in and enthusiasm for co-curricular activities (something that would quickly wane if, for example, each time a student participated in a Student Life activity, s/he had to complete a reflection paper). Importantly, co-curricular learning assessment evidence, such as survey data, will be gathered and evaluated by means of the TaskStream system so that evidence of co-curricular learning can be integrated with evidence of curricular learning. This is how UWest envisions overall assessment of program and institutional success on mission and educational effectiveness.

Comprehensive co-curricular assessment will evaluate the effectiveness of co-curricular programs offered by Student Life, Resident Life, the Wellness Center, and the Student Success Center. Assuming the cooperation of the Student Government and its sponsored clubs, it will also assess student club and Student Government activities. Finally, the assessment plans to cover student employment and volunteer opportunities (when not for academic credit) offered by or arranged through the University (internships, work study, graduate assistantships, and the like).

Assessment Plans, Policies and Procedures

UWest has put [comprehensive assessment policies](#) and procedures into place, including:

- [Program review and assessment](#)
- [Data/survey result distribution](#)
- Faculty performance evaluation⁴⁷
- Annual and five-year evaluations of policy and procedures

The assessment cycle is 4-5 years for the B.A. programs, 2-3 years for the M.A. and M.Div. programs, and 5-7 years for the Ph.D. program.

The table gives an overview of how assessment is planned.

	Development	Participants	Reviewed/ Approved by	Person/Office Responsible	Assessment Frequency
CLOs	Individual faculty	Program head/ other faculty	APCC / UWAC	Individual faculty / program head	Each time course offered
PLOs	Program head	Relevant faculty/ students	APCC / UWAC	Program head/ relevant Dean	Each semester; assessment cycle is based on program length
ILOs	MIC	Campus community	APCC / UWAC / Cabinet / Student Government	Program head / Deans / President	Each semester; assessment cycle is 5 years

Results & Feedback

As described above, UWest now has well-developed human and technological infrastructures for comprehensive learning assessment at all levels. The assessment culture is evidence based and relies principally on direct evidence. Course learning outcomes are now clearly mapped to the program and institutional level. As a result, program heads have already been able to see, in the development phase of the outcomes, where programs and courses need to be adjusted to better meet the University's goals for its students.

Moreover, because of the rubric model the University has adopted, every student and faculty member can see how what is happening at the course level ultimately connects to the school's mission and vision. This has

⁴⁷ WASC Evidence/4-Resources/ Performance Evaluation

fostered greater awareness of the UWest mission and identity. Co-curricular activities are now also tied into the assessment framework. Consequently, UWest is better equipped than before to assess whether and to what extent its institutional learning outcomes have been achieved.

From what the University has been able to learn, few schools have launched University-wide comprehensive learning outcomes assessment. Possibly, UWest is one of the only schools to have attempted assessment on such a wide scale. This is where being a small school works in UWest's favor: thanks to the assessment plans and structures in place, this ambitious goal is achievable. The University now approaches the evaluation of program and institutional effectiveness with confidence.

Ongoing & Planned Actions

UWest remains on track to implement its comprehensive assessment of curricular and co-curricular learning at all levels as it continues to develop and assess CLOs and CCPOs according to the procedures and timelines described above. The purpose of the assessment is to improve student learning, enhance program effectiveness, and ensure the realization of mission. The University recognizes the role of understanding and using assessment results in the institutional decision-making process. Results from the Spring 2012 CLO assessment test phase have already been evaluated in terms of how well they [address mission](#).

In early 2013, the IRAO will provide all programs with the raw and aggregated assessment data generated via the TaskStream system. The UWAC will also meet to review and discuss these results and work with the program heads and faculty to interpret them. At that point, program heads will meet with their faculty to review the CLO assessment data. These reviews will examine:

- How well CLOs are linked with PLOs
- How well the CLOs have been achieved
- The necessity and appropriateness of the assessed courses/activities for the whole program
- The appropriateness of the course/activities in terms of content and pedagogy

Academic and co-curricular heads will then plan necessary program revisions based on these data as well as data from other sources (e.g. student course evaluations, course cancellations, peer teaching evaluations, other surveys, and the like). The program heads will report their conclusions and plans of actions to the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Dean of Student Affairs, respectively, and once the requisite committee approvals have been gathered, program improvements will be implemented and reflected in the 2013/2014 UWest Catalogue. Student representatives will be included in the discussion and significant findings and program changes will be communicated to the Student Government as well as the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

As is apparent, assessment is an ongoing dynamic process, and CLOs and PLOs, though well thought out and crafted, are working documents. As the University moves through the cycles of development, implementation, review, and change, it is expected that outcomes will be further refined and differentiated. By the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review in 2014, a wide variety of assessment results will be available that demonstrate the level of student learning at all levels and show steps taken to improve learning in curricular as well as co-curricular programs.

Other Changes

WASC's Concerns

The [WASC CPR Report](#) references three themes identified by [UWest CPR Report](#) submitted to them prior to the December 2010 CPR visit. These three themes overlap with the above items in significant ways. In addition to showing progress towards the Action Items, UWest should demonstrate progress towards the themes previously identified. They are as follows (from WASC CPR Report page 5):

- Theme 1: Development and implementation of a comprehensive student enrollment and retention plan (overlaps with Action Item 4).
- Theme 2: Improvement of assessment of student learning to ensure educational effectiveness at course, program and institutional levels (overlaps with Action Item 5 & 7).
- Theme 3: Defining and adopting a "teacher-scholar-service leader" model to improve faculty performance in instruction, assessment, research, mentorship and service (overlaps with Action Item 6).

UWest's Concerns

The University agrees that the themes identified by the CPR Visit Team have been central to UWest's efforts to recruit and retain more students, to assess educational effectiveness institution-wide, and to improve the conditions for faculty while raising and formalizing the expectations of them. Thanks to the thorough analysis of the challenges facing UWest, both by the Visiting Team and the Commission, the University has been able to improve in all of the identified areas and themes by utilizing an evidence-based approach to its analysis. As a result, UWest has harnessed its own mission in the process of improvement, thus capitalizing on its inherent strengths. The careful analysis that WASC has required has also helped the University recognize remaining weaknesses.

Implemented Actions

As outlined under Action Item 4: Resources and elsewhere in this report, UWest has developed and implemented a comprehensive [Enrollment Management Plan](#) covering student recruitment and retention, including the creation and ongoing activities of a better staffed and more coordinated Enrollment Management Team. Significantly, enrollments have, in fact, increased dramatically in the past year, rising 30% while [conversion rate](#) has stabilized and [retention has improved](#).

The University has greatly improved the assessment of student learning to ensure educational effectiveness at the course, program, and institution level by, first, better defining what educational effectiveness at UWest means, i.e. by creating measurable [learning outcomes](#) clearly aligned with the University's mission and values. As explained in Action Item 7: Assessment, the University has implemented human and [technological assessment infrastructures](#) that allow for comprehensive measurement of learning. Programs have [review policies, procedures, and timelines](#) in place that will provide significant evidence of program and course effectiveness by the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review, currently scheduled for 2014.

Finally, UWest has defined and is in the process of adopting a [Teaching, Scholarship, Service Leader Model](#) to improve faculty performance in instruction, assessment, research, mentorship, and service. To support that professional growth, UWest is also allocating additional resources to Faculty Development. Additionally, formalized [faculty policies](#) have helped to clarify faculty workloads and duties. The University is also in the process of increasing educational support staff and has [plans for hiring](#) more full-time faculty whose goals, skills, and personalities align with UWest's mission and values.

UWest has also achieved the following goals since 2010:

- Continued physical and infrastructure improvements
- Strengthened student government and student clubs to provide much needed social infrastructure for students
- Expanded and improved continuing education programs in order to connect with communities beyond the walls of the University and provide service to them

The results, feedback, and ongoing/planned actions relating to these themes will not be discussed here as they have already been adequately covered in the prior sections. Moreover, moving forward, UWest is no longer using the three themes model and has instead adopted the four [strategic priorities](#), which are outlined in more detail regarding their ongoing and planning actions under Action Item 4: Resources.

Conclusion

Reflection

Receiving initial accreditation in 2006 was a monumental achievement for UWest, and the campus community would have been very happy to pass the CPR Review in 2010 and move on to the Educational Effectiveness Review without further delay. However, the University would not have been well served had events unfolded that way. As the Visiting Team and the Commission recognized, we were not ready. The University knew that it had sound academic programs, a qualified faculty, stable funding, and a mission that its students and employees could embrace. What the institution was lacking, however, it has only been able to gain in the short time since that review, barely 20 months, thanks to the focus and urgency that WASC communicated. Indeed, it is WASC's recasting of UWest's three development themes⁴⁸ (for the 2008 Institutional Proposal) as the seven Action Items, that has allowed UWest to go through a process of institutional maturation that has been both invigorating and, occasionally, exhausting.

The process of responding to WASC's concerns by launching new initiatives and activities, revising existing practices, procedures, and policies, assessing the outcomes of our efforts, and ensuring continuous process improvement was at times a daunting task – let alone trying to document it all! Along the way, the accreditation team has overcome many challenges and trials, some of which seemed truly insurmountable. However, looking back now on the mountain of evidence and the litany of successes UWest has achieved over the past two years, the faculty, staff, students, and alumni are filled with pride. Among these successes is the university-wide recognition of and realignment with the mission and identity of the University – a truly life-giving force.

UWest goes into the Fall 2012 semester with record enrollment numbers, an increased cadre of exceptional full-time faculty, pay raises, and an enhanced understanding of who we are. Along the way, we have had to stop and ask ourselves many questions: *What do we mean by student learning? How is our mission related to our programs and services? Can we sustain ourselves and grow? And, the favorite question of our former and much-missed ALO, Ken Locke: What is our evidence?* What better place, though, than a university to tackle such questions? Many of the skills we needed in order to explore these issues, we found among the amazing students, staff, and faculty of this school. And, when we realized we were lacking expertise or know-how in certain areas, we did our best to recruit the people who had them.

As a result, UWest is ready for the next step. Our mission to educate the whole person in a context informed by Buddhist wisdom and values is clearly defined and more deeply embedded in our culture: Peace, Harmony, Responsibility, Compassion, and Excellence—these are the values we believe have enabled us to overcome difficult challenges and devastating losses. They are also the ideals that inform our educational programs. In a word, they are the values we want our students to take with them into the world.

However, our ideals are not fluttering in the wind. Thanks to the preparations for the Special Report, UWest now has a highly qualified and involved Board of Trustees, stable leadership, expanded organizational functions, and financial, academic, and assessment plans that will enable the University to continue to grow and improve. We know we have these things because we have put systems, policies, procedures, and technology in place that have created a culture of evidence. We can now learn from ourselves and about ourselves. Equally important, we have invested in good people who are curious about and attracted by our whole-person approach to an education informed by Buddhist wisdom and values, and who want to participate in fostering cultural understanding and appreciation between East and West—and all corners of the planet.

⁴⁸ Theme I: Development and implementation of a comprehensive student enrollment and retention plan;
Theme II: Improvement of assessment of student learning to ensure educational effectiveness at course, program and institutional levels; and
Theme III: Defining and adopting a “Teacher-Scholar-Service Leader” model to improve faculty performance in instruction, assessment, research, mentorship and service.

Recommendations and Follow-up Steps

Even though many challenges remain, UWests feels secure in our willingness and ability to tackle them. For each of the seven areas in which we have registered significant improvements—Mission, Board, Leadership, Resources, Academics, Faculty, and Assessment—we barely pause to congratulate one another as we move on to address remaining lacunae and, thanks to the growth we have worked so hard for, new problems to solve. But we believe that we are better equipped than ever to meet them head on.

Thanks to WASC, UWest has refocused and emerges with a *student-centered, mission-driven decision making framework*, which it must now continue to strengthen and expand. This can only be achieved by the appropriate inclusion of all stakeholders in the stewardship of this university. UWest must continue to formalize its processes and procedures, increase transparency, and explore ways to live the mission in all its activities and endeavors.

From each of the seven Action Items we have addressed above, we shall highlight one aspect that is essential for continued growth and improvement. These are not the only ones, but they are the ones to which the University should give priority in the immediate future:

- Continue to improve communication, especially between leadership and the other campus constituents
- Receive increased support from the Board of Trustees in developing vision, outreach, guidance and revenue sources
- Recruit additional highly qualified leaders who embrace the UWest mission and thrive in its unique culture
- Invest proactively in our academic programs and support services by hiring additional faculty and staff to keep up with growth
- Build out our academic programs in ways that capitalize on our strengths and uniqueness
- Continue to improve conditions for faculty and staff in order to recruit and retain the best
- Ensure that our faculty have the time and training to conduct the assessments that will measure student learning at all levels

In the end, it is about people—foremost our students. The recommendations listed above are only meaningful when we keep our students and our mission in focus. UWest will, therefore, continue to live its mission, centering our efforts on our students and offering them a values-driven holistic education that unfolds in an atmosphere of free inquiry, and aligns with the best standards of American higher education.