

ACCREDITATION REPORT FROM THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

Executive Summary for the Board of Trustees

Prepared by Joe Untener, Associate Provost for Faculty and Administrative Affairs

After a September 2007 site visit, a review of the University of Dayton's self-study and extensive interviews with faculty, administration, staff, committees and students, the Higher Learning Commission in December awarded UD continued accreditation until its next comprehensive visit in 2017-18. The full report will be discussed in the Academic Affairs Committee and is available to any trustee on the secure area of the Board's website.

The report from the HLC, a commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, was excellent. In addition to meeting all criteria as required, UD was found to have adequately resolved four out of the five concerns raised in the 1997 accreditation visit— inadequate technological investment to meet stated objectives; a shortage of library resources for doctoral programs; inconsistency in review and assessment of graduate programs; and inadequate investment in facilities and equipment for graduate programs. While UD is making some progress on the fifth area of concern from 1997—diversity—the University must submit a progress report on institutional diversity in June 2011. On diversity, the team “agrees with the self-study that the institution has a long way to go to achieve its desired destination as identified in A Vision of Excellence.”

The visiting team gave dozens of positive responses affirming UD's fulfillment of the five accreditation criteria. “All of this effort and dedication to mission is a tremendous strategic advantage for UD,” the visiting team wrote. “With all due respect to the Marianist virtue of humility, the team feels that UD can be extremely proud of its heritage, its mission and its vibrant learning and living community.”

AMONG THE POSITIVE COMMENTS:

Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity

“UD's mission is well understood, articulated, and 'lived' by all of its constituents....One of the greatest strengths of UD is its explicit, firm commitment to community....It was clear to the team that the Board of Trustees, President and the President's entire leadership team will continue to nurture and articulate UD's Marianist and Catholic mission to all constituencies.... Students frequently expressed feelings of fondness and loyalty to the institution and to each other....Clearly, there is a strong sense of community and collegiality among the staff. They are student focused, embrace UD values, and see those values as a reason to work at UD....Obvious to the team was that the staff clearly 'loves the place,' and is willing to work together for constructive change.” (See Assurance Section, pp. 13-14.)

Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future

“The administrative/executive leadership is articulate and knowledgeable about UD and its long-term needs and goals....UD's Board of Trustees is energetic and appropriately engaged in the institution's mission....Audited Financial Statements reflect a strong, healthy institution

able to meet the needs of UD both immediately and into the future....UD's Advancement team is a most active and productive segment of the institution hosting or endorsing 360 events in one year, drawing about 8,000 alumni and friends....UD has made great strides over the past ten years in applications of information technology to support academic programs and administrative operations." (See Assurance Section, pp. 15-16.)

Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

"Effective teaching and learning have high priority at UD....The UD Libraries are excellent repositories of knowledge and are at the forefront of developing and using technology to support the learning mission....UD has directed a lot of resources to create the Learning Teaching Center and to support its work....In the team's opinion the Teaching Fellows program deserves special mention....Students appreciate that faculty will work with them outside of class and appreciate the lively atmosphere in their generally small classes....At UD, faith development is a significant part of the learning experience....UD is doing a thoughtful job of developing its international programs....ArtStreet and its dynamic director are, in the team's opinion, making a qualitative difference on campus." (See Assurance Section, pp. 20-23.)

Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge

"The University of Dayton has a long and honored tradition of educational excellence....UD offers a wide array of development and research opportunities for its faculty....UD also has a robust program of general education that coheres with its mission....Academic and student support programs contribute to the development of student skills and attitudes fundamental to responsible uses of knowledge....An entrepreneurial spirit pervades UD." (See Assurance Section, pp. 24-26.)

Criterion 5: Engagement and Service

The HLC noted that UD's publications, advertising and website are clear, thorough and attractive and meet its expectations regarding institutional operations and internal and external relationships. It also noted that "UD has a most impressive history of community initiatives....At UD service is based upon listening respectfully, responding to articulated needs, mutual learning and an 'asset-building' model of community partnerships....UD's commitment to community engagement is also very evident in the multiplex of operations it has established to serve its constituencies. Included among these operations are more than fifteen research centers, institutes, and programs whose primary mission is to engage the community and deliver services to external constituencies." The HLC team mentioned the Dayton Early College Academy and the Doctor of Physical Therapy program as examples that illustrate thoughtful community engagement in response to articulated community needs. (See Assurance Section, pp. 28-30.)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REPORT

The “Advancement” section of the report offers UD some suggestions that will help to improve UD as it moves into the future. They are:

- More effectively coordinate the myriad outreach initiatives to ensure efficiency “at a time of increasing need and resource scarcity.” Consider the formation of an “Outreach and Community Engagement Council” to provide this coordination and oversight.
- Explore specific diversity ideas such as fellowships and workshops, more support for faculty hiring, consortium membership, stronger Enrollment Management diversity planning, and better ties to the city.
- Improve the culture in the Student Neighborhood particularly with regard to the alcohol issue.
- Continue with the planning and advancement of Learning Living Communities, strengthening them and expanding them beyond first year and residential students.
- Continue and further enhance support for part-time faculty.
- Prepare for the expansion of distance learning since this activity will likely increase.
- Improve the assessment of student learning through increased attention and support. Consider the appointment of a university-level coordinator for this activity.
- Ensure that job descriptions are documented and that the tuition remission program meets applicable IRS codes.
- Improve Student Orientation activities and ensure that they connect to the Learning Living Communities.
- Implement the enhancements to student advising that are presented in the *Habits of Inquiry* document.