

## *HLC Self Study Update*

### Criterion Two Preliminary Findings

Two sets of information are available to guide the drafting of the Criterion Two section of the Higher Learning Commission self study. Co-chaired by Mike Hughes and Caroline Stern, this committee presented its early determinations at a March 11 meeting. The co-chairs have been extensively assisted by Carol Quigley, among others, in producing this work.

Criterion 2 reads: ***The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.***

The committee has identified the following as areas of ***strength*** for Ferris regarding Criterion 2:

- The organization's resources are adequate for achievement of the educational quality it claims to provide. Evidences include
  - Sound fiscal condition, with financial audits to verify this
  - The College of Business recently earned accreditation from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)
  - The University's graduates achieve high placement rates
  - Classes are taught by faculty, not graduate assistants
  - There is an increased number of scholarships available
- The organization uses its human resources effectively and it intentionally develops its human resources to meet future changes
  - Consistent hiring processes require specific search requirements so adequate applicant pools can be achieved
  - Summer University
  - Ferris Employee Leadership Program
  - Staff performance appraisals are generally conducted annually; an evaluative component exists for tenure-track faculty and post-tenure review exists for tenured faculty
  - The University's Tuition Waiver employee benefit
  - A partnership with Western Michigan University was established in the early 2000s to provide WMU Ph.D. level classes at Ferris, and many Ferris faculty and staff took advantage of this opportunity
  - Promotion and merit system for faculty
- The organization's history of financial resources development and investment documents a forward-looking concern for ensuring educational quality (e.g., investments in faculty development, technology, learning support services, new or renovated facilities).
  - Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (see annual reports)
  - FLITE resources
  - New Granger Center for Construction Management and HVACR, Interdisciplinary Resource Center, and planned Michigan College of Optometry building
  - Increased assets in Ferris Foundation
  - Classroom improvements over the last 3-4 years
  - Wireless initiative
  - 'FerrisConnect' and Banner
  - Campus safety initiatives (text message system, loudspeaker, message board on Wheeler, training)
  - University College services (SLA, SCHOLAR program, Tutoring Services, Honors Program)
  - Campus Master Plan

Opportunities for improvement may include these:

- The state’s financial situation
- Need to consider how/what services will change with a potential loss of resources
- Need to cross-train employees
- New Academic Affairs leadership
- Supervisory courses offered through FerrisConnect
- Capital campaign
- Other revenue sources, such as grants

If you want to offer observations about these tentative findings, please send them to [hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu](mailto:hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu).

In addition to the findings that emerged from data (generally documents) collection and analysis along with extensive one-on-one and small group interviews, the Criterion 2 university-wide survey results are now also available to guide this group’s report. The preliminary findings noted above were prepared ahead of this campus-wide survey, and the Committee will now incorporate these results into their next iteration.

The Steering Committee will consider the results at its next meeting, but here are some early observations contained within the data. The percentages reported reflect the valid percentage who either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statement. A total of 289 individuals completed the survey, including 105 faculty; 71 administrators; and 112 staff; 1 did not report the primary role.

Question	Overall	Adminis- trators - %	Faculty %	Staff %
Q4a: Our planning documents reflect a sound understanding of the University’s current capacity	61.7% ( <i>Unfamiliar = 34.3%</i> )	68.6	66	53
Q4d: Our planning processes include effective environmental scanning	46.8 ( <i>Unfamiliar = 38.2</i> )	57.1	44.6	42.1
Q4e Ferris State’s environment is supportive of innovation and change	59 ( <i>Not familiar = 14.7%</i> )	70	59.2	51.5
Q4g Ferris State clearly identifies authority for decision-making about organizational goals	52.4 ( <i>not familiar = 22.1%</i> )	60.8	51.5	48
Q4h Our resources are adequate to ensure educational quality	53.5 ( <i>unfamiliar= 14.9%</i> )	64.7	48.5	51.5
Q4i The University uses its human resources effectively	43.8 ( <i>Unfamiliar = 15.1%</i> )	45.7	39.2	47.5
Q4k Our financial decisions demonstrate concern for ensuring educational quality	55.6 ( <i>unfamiliar = 17.6%</i> )	67.2	50.5	53.6
Q4n We maintain effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and using organizational information	48.4 ( <i>unfamiliar = 30.6%</i> )	56.5	46.6	44.9
Q4p Periodic reviews of Academic and Administrative units contribute to the improvement of the University	54.3 ( <i>unfamiliar = 22.9%</i> )	71.4	47	50
Q4q Ferris State provides adequate support for its evaluation and assessment processes	54.6 ( <i>unfamiliar = 22.3%</i> )	62.8	51.5	52.5
Q4u Our planning documents reflect a commitment to diversity	64.2% ( <i>unfamiliar = 26.9%</i> )	74.3	67	54.6
Q4v Planning processes involve both internal and external constituents	56.1% ( <i>unfamiliar = 26.9%</i> )	62.8	53.9	54.2

It is clear that the University will need to heighten the campus’s knowledge of planning and budgeting processes. A high proportion reports a lack of awareness in these areas. Among the extensive comments offered were observations about this lack of awareness, as well as the observation that it is too early to know how effective the current planning process will be. A full copy of the report is available from the HLC Steering Committee by writing to [hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu](mailto:hlcselfstudy@ferris.edu)