Saint Louis University Self-Study Process: Preparation for Institutional Reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association

Presentation to the Faculty Senate
September 29, 2009

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Institutional accreditation in the U.S. is

- Voluntary, peer-based, non-governmental, BUT the US Dept of Education ties accreditation to Title IV Financial Aid
- Conducted for quality control and improvement purposes
- Overseen by six regional accrediting bodies

SLU is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association (NCA), whose region includes

- 19 states
- 1000+ institutions (all types), including ten Jesuit institutions (Creighton, Detroit-Mercy, John Carroll, Loyola-Chicago, Marquette, Regis, Rockhurst, SLU, Wheeling Jesuit, Xavier)
2002 NCA Accreditation

SLU’s last institutional accreditation review occurred in April 2002

• Self-Study Report, *A Decade of Renaissance*, primarily descriptive

• Site Visit Team, while strongly supporting continued accreditation, identified several areas for strengthening and specified two that required “institutional attention and Commission follow-up”
  – Integration of all assessment efforts and utilization of results, particularly at the University level, need to be moved forward significantly.
  – Maturation of the process of consistently and widely utilizing data from assessment programs to enhance student learning needs to occur.

- Building a Culture of Evidence-Based Decision Making Throughout the University
- Outcomes Articulation and Alignment with the Five Dimensions of the SLU Experience
- Additional Assessment of the Core Courses

- NCA response to Progress Report (January 2006)

*The SLU progress report and support documents addressed these challenges.*
## Key Activities for Next Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>Planning Team: Theme, Goals, Steering Committee, Report Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2009</td>
<td>Steering Committee Appointed</td>
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<td>Summer 2009</td>
<td>Steering Committee Planning Begins</td>
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<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>Steering Committee Work Begins; Criterion Subcommittees Formed and Begin Work; HLC Liaison Dr. John Taylor Visits SLU (October)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring - Summer 2011</td>
<td>Preliminary Self-Study Report Draft Completed; Consultant-Evaluator Team Members Identified</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 OR Spring 2012</td>
<td>Consultant-Evaluator Site Team (~10-15 members) Visits SLU</td>
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Self-Study Theme

*Magis: Advancing Mission into*
*Saint Louis University’s Third Century*

- Centers on SLU’s commitment to and essence of the mission, its longevity, and its viability for the future.
- Continues the theme of the last self-study, *A Decade of Renaissance* BUT focuses on the future.
Goals for Self-Study & Reaccreditation Processes

• Assess SLU’s effectiveness in advancing its mission
• Gather substantive evidence to tell the SLU story and demonstrate that the Criteria for Accreditation are met
• Inform strategic planning by proposing institutional strategies to address identified challenges and to take advantage of opportunities for improvement
• Engage in active organizational learning
• Strengthen the SLU community by creating opportunities for widespread and in-depth engagement in the process and by integrating the knowledge and expertise of stakeholders
• Achieve continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
HLC Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion One: Mission and Integrity

Criterion Statement: The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

• Core Component 1a: The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

• Core Component 1b: In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

• Core Component 1c: Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

• Core Component 1d: The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

• Core Component 1e: The organization upholds and protects its integrity.
HLC Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future

Criterion Statement: 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.

- **Core Component 2a**: The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.
- **Core Component 2b**: The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
- **Core Component 2c**: The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.
- **Core Component 2d**: All levels of planning align with the organization’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.
Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Criterion Statement: The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

- **Core Component 3a:** The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.
- **Core Component 3b:** The organization values and supports effective teaching.
- **Core Component 3c:** The organization creates effective learning environments.
- **Core Component 3d:** The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.
HLC Criteria for Accreditation

Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Criterion Statement: The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

- Core Component 4a: The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
- Core Component 4b: The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.
- Core Component 4c: The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.
- Core Component 4d: The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.
Criterion Five: Engagement and Service

Criterion Statement: As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

- **Core Component 5a:** The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.
- **Core Component 5b:** The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.
- **Core Component 5c:** The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.
- **Core Component 5d:** Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.
Self-Study Committee
Structure, etc.

Steering Committee
Chair; Five Criterion Subcommittee Co-Chair Teams; Student Representative; Madrid Campus Academic Dean; Writer; Two Consultants (Faculty/HLC Site Team Chairs); Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs; Assistant Provost/SLU HLC Liaison; Administrative Assistant + Executive Staff Liaisons: Fr. Biondi, Interim Provost Patankar

Criterion Subcommittees
Co-Chair Teams; Executive Staff Liaisons; SLU Faculty and Staff (including Madrid) + Alumni, Board, and Community Representatives

Other:
• Students engaged throughout the process
• Web site and PR plan under development
Self-Study Report
Framework

Five Dimensions of the Saint Louis University Experience:
SLU’s Framework for Student Formation

- Scholarship and Knowledge
- Intellectual Inquiry and Communication
- Community Building
- Leadership and Service
- Spirituality and Values
The Graduate School: Assessment
A second survey is sent each spring to graduate assistants. Its purpose is to confirm on a Likert-type scale whether their assignments are consistent with the School’s policies and expectations, and to investigate their satisfaction with the learning experiences of their assistantships. Here, too, the responses are uniformly positive. Both surveys provide valuable insights into students’ perceptions of their graduate educations at SLU. All data are distributed to departments to affect any required programmatic changes.

Assuring Continued Access: Support for Graduate Students
Graduate College funding for fellowships has risen from $646,000 in fiscal year 1997 to $950,000 in fiscal year 2006. The Graduate College has focused on increasing stipends rather than maximizing the total number of awards. Set at $8,400 in 1996, fellowship stipends had risen to $18,000 by fall 2006 and are scheduled to increase to $20,000 in fall 2007. Recipients receive a tuition and service fee waiver. In addition, recruitment fellowship awards for incoming doctoral students now are for the first and fourth year of study, with the sponsoring program required to provide a matching award in years two and three. With this award structure, instituted in fall 2000, the Graduate College is able to offer four continuous years of support to its most attractive fellowship nominees, and some individual programs offer awards at higher stipend levels or for a longer duration, as appropriate.
Questions?

We welcome any opportunity to meet with your departments, schools/colleges/libraries to explain the accreditation process and criteria, and to help everyone understand their role in this important process.

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