REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT

TO

University of St. Thomas
St. Paul, Minnesota

November 11-13, 2013

FOR

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association

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I. CONTEXT AND NATURE OF VISIT

A. Purpose of Visit

Comprehensive visit to University of St. Thomas

B. Institutional Context

The University of St. Thomas is the largest private university in Minnesota. Since its founding in 1885 it has provided a liberal arts education in the Catholic intellectual tradition with a focus on career preparation. The main campus is located in St. Paul, Minnesota, and another key location is in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota. The institution is comprised of seven academic units that award bachelor’s, master’s, education specialist, juris doctorate and doctoral degrees. More than 100 major and 50 minor fields of study are available at the undergraduate level and more than 60 are offered at the graduate level. The institution enrolls about 6300 undergraduate students and about 4000 graduate students. It employees some 460 full-time and 396 part-time faculty, and 1,100 staff.

C. Unique Aspects or Additions to the Visit

None

An observer from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education was scheduled to attend the visit but did not attend.

A new president met with the team, the first lay president of the University of St. Thomas and the first female president.

D. Additional Locations or Branch Campuses Visited (if applicable)

None

E. Distance Delivery Reviewed

About 1% of the total credits offered by the institution and 2.5% of programs offered are taken online in four small online graduate programs. The team met with several faculty who teach in these programs and with representatives of Bisk Education, a for-profit partner in the offering of two of these programs through an agreement that has HLC approval. Two online classes were reviewed by the team.

The institution operates within the 5% HLC stipulation for the number of total programs offered online. Online courses seem equivalent to traditional courses in quality.

II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process

The self-study process was comprehensive in terms of the length of time devoted to the effort, the large number of university personnel involved with the steering committee or
consulted in the self-study review, and the range of issues addressed with regard to each of the five criteria. The on-campus visit was well managed and the team was able to accomplish its work effectively. The only disappointments were poor or lack of attendance at the open meetings for faculty, staff, students and alumni and the few young faculty who participated in the campus interviews.

B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report

The report is a good faith effort to address the five criteria fully and honestly with both descriptive and evaluative information. The team judged that the information gained through on campus meetings and review of materials was accurately reflected in the self-study.

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

No formal follow up was recommended as a result of the last comprehensive visit. However, the Advancement Section of the team report offered numerous suggestions that have been taken seriously and addressed satisfactorily by the institution.

D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment

Internal and external notifications and solicitations were published in a sufficient and timely manner.

No third-party comments were received.

III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The team's worksheet on federal compliance is included in this report as Appendix C.

IV. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

CRITERION ONE: MISSION. The institution’s mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution’s operations.

Core Component 1A: The institution’s mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

Subcomponent 1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.

Subcomponent 2. The institution’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
Subcomponent 3. The institution’s planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission.

Team Determination:  
- x Core Component is met
- __ Core Component is met with concerns
- __ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- After the 2003 re-accreditation of the University of St. Thomas, the institution revised its mission statement and adopted conviction and value statements. The institution made appropriate use of shared governance to revise the mission, and the mission statement and its corollary documents were approved by the Board of Trustees. It is clear that the mission of the institution is broadly understood and supported in manifold ways, based on a review of the institution’s planning and public documents and interviews with numerous constituencies on campus.

- In order to affirm and bring life to the mission statement, especially that part of the mission that reflects on the Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas established an Office for Mission, which reports directly to the president. The office has undergone some structural change since its inauguration, but the core function of the office has not been altered and it functions effectively to root the institution in its religious tradition in both symbolic and practical ways with regard to strategic decisions and the education of its students. For example, MBA classes are infused with questions of ethical decision making, as reported by business students. Ethics is more than a course in the curriculum.

- Through the learning opportunities that faculty and academic programs offer, students are invited to gain the critical thinking and other skills and abilities that the institutional mission privileges. Support over many years for an unusually strong and extensive common core curriculum is good evidence of the institution’s commitments to a liberal education.

- Additional evidence of the institution’s adherence to mission and core values can be found in a strong service learning program, a wide variety of responsive student services, widespread involvement by faculty in curriculum planning and implementation, study abroad opportunities and opportunities for students to be involved in research and other forms of active learning.

Core Component 1B: The mission is articulated publicly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution’s emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.

Subcomponent 3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.
Team Determination:  

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- The University of St. Thomas mission statement appears on the university website, in printed material, and on banners positioned in public spaces on both the St. Paul and Minneapolis campuses. Corollary statements of convictions and vision, which give life to the mission statement, appear alongside the mission statement on the website and in printed material. The ubiquity of the mission statement places it on the lips of students, faculty, and staff.
- In response to the last reaccreditation report, the University of St. Thomas revised its mission statement in 2004. In conjunction with the strategic priorities identified in 2005, the mission statement and related documents outline the institution’s commitment to learning by students, faculty, and members of the community.
- The vision statement and strategic priorities documents plainly identify the constituents that the University of St. Thomas intends to serve with its academic programs and co-curricular offerings.

Core Component 1C: The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

   Subcomponent 1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

   Subcomponent 2. The institution’s processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

Team Determination:  

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Founded as an institution to provide advanced education to individuals largely excluded from higher education, the University of St. Thomas remains committed to fostering an inclusive and accessible community, as evidenced by its public documents, admissions practices and hiring and employee guidelines and standards.
- The University of St. Thomas’ commitment to facilitating opportunities for study abroad, meaningful service learning, and community engagement are admirable. As a number of students told the team it would be very difficult not to be involved in educational and service activities that take students beyond their comfort zone, to interact with persons in the Twin Cities and beyond of vastly different backgrounds, economic statuses and perspectives on life.
- As an institution with a firm commitment to its Catholic identity and to an inclusive student body, the University of St. Thomas acknowledges that it struggles to ensure diverse students, faculty and staff feel comfortable and remain at the institution. Of late, because of political debates external to the university, the challenge to ensure
that LGBTQ students feel at home has been a particular emphasis. The institution has played an admirable role in facilitating reasoned debate on issues in the community, and it has begun to discuss the concerns with LGBTQ students, if in uncoordinated ways. Also, and again by its own admission, The University of St. Thomas is properly concerned about the rate of demonstrable progress (and there has been progress) in attracting and retaining under-represented minority students and faculty.

- The institution’s struggle to improve to its own satisfaction the creation of an inclusive institution for learning points to a central feature of the institution: decentralization. For example, the Office for Mission does not meet with the directors of academic and support service units for under-represented minorities. Those directors work well together as an informal network, but the institution would be aided in the achievement of its mission by a more purposefully collaborative institutional response to efforts at creating an inclusive, diverse community.

Core Component 1D: The institution’s mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

Subcomponent 1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.

Subcomponent 2. The institution’s educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

Subcomponent 3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Team Determination:  
- x Core Component is met
- ___ Core Component is met with concerns
- ____ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Serving the public good of Minneapolis and St. Paul were de nova considerations in the founding of the University of St. Thomas. With a mission that focuses not only on learning but also development of responsible citizens, the institution remains committed to serving these communities and more broadly defined communities as well.
- The University of St. Thomas acts on its commitment to the public good through, for example, creating opportunities for robust engagement with the community. Programs in the College of Education, Leadership and Counseling and School of Social Work, which provide opportunities for reciprocal exchange of information and training, provide examples, among many, of appropriate, extensive engagement with the community.
- Through its Office for Mission and Campus Ministry the institution has recently hosted a civilized and balanced public conversation within the local community about gay marriage. This conversation is one example among many of the institution’s adherence to its Catholic identity as well as its solid commitment to learning,
understanding diverse points of view and ways of knowing, and self-discovery.

**Team Determination on Criterion One:**

- x. Criterion is met
- __ Criterion is met with concerns
- __ Criterion is not met

**Summary Statement on Criterion:**

The University of St. Thomas has a clear and coherent mission that informs its planning, academic and co-curricular programming, decision making and budgeting. The mission is articulated in numerous public documents, including bulletins, handbooks and marketing materials. The mission and its implementation show a commitment to diverse populations and to service on behalf of the public good.

The institution should continue to strengthen its commitment to serve diverse populations as directed by its mission.

**CRITERION TWO: Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct.** The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

**Core Component 2A:** The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows fair and ethical policies and processes for its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

**Team Determination:**

- x. Core Component is met
- __ Core Component is met with concerns
- __ Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

- The University of St. Thomas has in place clear policies and procedures for budgeting, billing, and managing its financial resources. These policies are easily accessed and utilized by faculty and staff. Efforts have been made to further streamline purchasing and to improve the University’s customer service in the Business Office. Policies written for students are made available on the website.
- The University of St. Thomas follows standard accounting practices, including the completion of regular independent audits by an external accounting firm. Audits conducted in fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012 were unqualified.
- Over the last decade, improvements have been documented in shared governance at the University of St. Thomas. In addition to the formation of an active faculty senate, members of the faculty participate on many faculty and university committees. Interviews with the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, other senate members and members of administration confirmed that members of the faculty and administration are working together in ways that are mutually beneficial.
Examples of this include faculty membership on the search committee for the new President and the planned involvement of at least sixteen members of the faculty in the new strategic planning process.

- Personnel are hired within a defined classification system and personnel policies extend to individuals working in each of the campuses and locations. The personnel program strives to foster a positive academic environment and protect the rights of the college’s faculty, staff, administration, and students.
- A commitment to fairness and integrity is reflected in the University’s formal documents and its policies. Many policies apply to all members of the university community including the Sexual Harassment Policy, the Hate Crimes and Bias-Motivated Incidents Policy and the Whistle-Blower policy. Other policies appropriately pertain to specific constituencies.
- The University of St. Thomas is a member in good standing of the National Collegiate Athletic Association and the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference. Annual compliance reports are submitted confirming student participation, gender balance, athletic revenues and financial aid. As the University of St. Thomas is an NCAA Division III program, no athletic scholarships are distributed to its student athletes.

**Core Component 2B:** The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

**Team Determination:**
- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

- The University’s undergraduate catalog and website provide its students and the public detailed information about its academic programs, requirements for admission, requirements for graduation, and the credentials of faculty and staff. Tuition, fees, and estimated costs for attending are also provided in these locations with links to other sites for seeking additional information.
- Accurate information concerning the current accreditation relationship between the University of St. Thomas and the Higher Learning Commission is located on the Academic Assessment and Accreditation website. Other accreditation relationships are also made public on this site, in the undergraduate catalog, and on the websites of the departments, colleges and schools that have specialized accreditation and state approvals.
Core Component 2C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

Subcomponent 1. The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

Subcomponent 2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution’s internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

Subcomponent 3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.

Subcomponent 4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

Team Determination:  

x Core Component is met  
__ Core Component is met with concerns  
__ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Board policy, meeting minutes, and interviews with some members of the Board of Trustees, confirm that the organization, management and control of the University of St. Thomas are vested in the Board. Bylaws outline the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and the board committees. Meeting minutes show the board’s deliberations are focused on topics important to preserve and further strengthen the University.
- The Board of Trustees delegates the day-to-day management of the University to the President who in turn delegates responsibilities to the appropriate members of the administration and staff. At the time of this visit, the new President is working toward changes in structure that will alter reporting relationships and lines of delegation within members of administration.
- Members of the board of trustees, officers and other administrators at the University of St. Thomas are subject to completing a conflict of interest disclosure statement. Evidence on site confirmed that these statements had been signed during the last academic year and efforts were underway to secure them for 2013 from board and appropriate personnel.
- The Faculty Handbook outlines areas of primary faculty responsibility including curriculum subject matter, methods of instruction, research, and admission to graduate programs and undergraduate majors. Campus interviews confirm that meaningful consultation of the faculty is called for in other matters such as the development, revision, and elimination of academic programs; organization of academic structures and units; the hiring and evaluation of academic administrators; and the construction and renovation of academic facilities.
- The university’s website describes St. Thomas as a private, Catholic, liberal arts and comprehensive university. The University of St. Thomas is an independent university affiliated with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Following recommendations by the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and
Universities, the board has approved a structural change to elect its chair rather than having the archbishop of the Archdiocese automatically serve in that capacity.

Core Component 2D: The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Team Determination:  

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook documents the University’s commitment to academic freedom. Among the stated principles are the freedom to teach and to learn according to one’s obligation, vision, and training; freedom to publish the results of one’s study or research; and freedom to speak and write on public issues as a citizen. The Undergraduate Study Policy Book and the Graduate Study Policy Book include policies relating to students freedom to learn. At the University of St. Thomas, student academic freedom is described as a freedom to learn and to express oneself.
- The University of St. Thomas has worked to clarify its dual commitment to academic freedom and its Catholic identity through the Statement Regarding the Addressing of Controversial Issues. Here, this university states it commitment to providing curricular and co-curricular opportunities to educate its constituents about its Catholic beliefs and moral values; welcomes diverse members to the campus community; and ensures that members of the university community are treated with respect.
- Interviews with faculty and review of complaint files yielded no pattern of evidence suggesting issues with academic freedom at the University of St. Thomas.

Core Component 2E: The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Subcomponent 2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Subcomponent 3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Team Determination:  

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

Evidence:
University-wide policies and procedures are in place to foster the responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge. Policies, minutes, and campus interviews confirm effective oversight and support for the research and scholarly activities of faculty, staff, and students. As an example, all students engaging in university sponsored research are overseen by university personnel. Undergraduate students are assigned faculty who serve as project advisors and graduate students conduct research with oversight by project or thesis advisors and committees.

To keep pace with the growing number of research studies and applications submitted to the Institutional Review Board, many changes were made over the last decade. These include the creation of an administrative staff position to chair the IRB, development of an electronic submission process, and the creation of an informative IRB website. Workshops, seminars, and individual consultation are available to support faculty, staff, and students to gain assistance with the IRB application process.

Numerous policies address academic integrity and the ethical use of information resources at the University of St. Thomas. The Academic Integrity Policy, found in the Undergraduate Study Policy Book, includes definitions of cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Consequences for policy violations are outlined. The Office of the Registrar publishes these policies on its website for accessibility. Acts of dishonesty (e.g., cheating and plagiarism) are also addressed in the Student Code of Conduct at the University.

Team Determination on Criterion Two:

| X | Criterion is met |
| __ | Criterion is met with concerns |
| __ | Criterion is not met |

Summary Statement on Criterion:
The University of St. Thomas demonstrates its commitment to ethical and responsible conduct by establishing and implementing numerous policies and procedures regarding responsible behavior, maintaining a sufficiently autonomous governing board, and delegating the day-to-day operations of the institution to the president. The policies and procedures addressed throughout this criterion are organized and published in numerous locations. These policies and procedures as implemented result in integrity in financial, academic and co-curricular facets of the institution, responsible self presentation of the institution in numerous publications and online, and freedom of expression and the discovery and application of truth in a responsible fashion.

The team concurs with the self-study observation that members of the University community would benefit from a central repository for policies and procedures.

Advances have been made in shared governance at the University. Although it appears that the new president sincerely values the input of faculty and other constituents, periodic examination of shared governance should be continued in a manner that provides opportunities to examine the effectiveness of these efforts and an opportunity to receive recommendations for further improvements.
The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Core Component 3A: The institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

Subcomponent 1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.

Subcomponent 2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Team Determination:  
_x Core Component is met  
___ Core Component is met with concerns  
___ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

• The criteria for external accrediting agencies (ABA, ABET, ACS, APA, ATS, CSWE, NASM, NCATE, AACSB, CAHME) require that degree programs receiving such accreditations are functioning at a high academic level. A review of the exit reports from the most recent accreditation visits by these agencies supported the claims that the University of St. Thomas is functioning at a high level. The assessment reports that were available articulated and differentiated learning goals for the various degree and certificate programs. Interviews with the Academic Deans and members of the specific colleges and schools, as well as a review of a sample of course descriptions and course syllabi, confirmed that St. Thomas does provide the appropriate level of instruction to support its various degree programs with adequate differentiation between graduate and undergraduate programs. There is dual credit in some education courses, but the expectations for the graduate students are higher than those for the undergraduate students.

• Interviews with Online Programs personnel included members of their partner, Bisk Education of Tampa, FL. At this point, St. Thomas is piloting online delivery of two degrees in its College of Education, Leadership and Counseling. There are not yet any results to report. The strategic plan for the college calls for introducing online programs in that school in order to reach new markets in the near future. At this time credits in online programs account for only 1% if the total credits offered. Instructional content and services of the online courses are controlled by faculty and the online courses appear to be equivalent in quality to
traditional courses offered by the institution.

**Core Component 3B:** The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

**Subcomponent 1.** The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

**Subcomponent 2.** The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

**Subcomponent 3.** Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

**Subcomponent 4.** The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

**Subcomponent 5.** The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution’s mission.

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

- A Core Curriculum Taskforce was set up in 2003 and published its report in 2006. The recommendations of that report have been implemented as is evidenced by the undergraduate catalog and by interviews with the Core Curriculum Committee. By design, the recommendations tie to the university’s mission. The nine areas of study in the Core Curriculum are covered by required courses, events, and optional studies such as the study abroad program. There has been some tracking of the measurable skills intended to result from the curriculum. The committee admits that this is a difficult task, worthy of further study and the team has determined that additional assessment efforts are needed (see Criterion 4).

- The extensive core curriculum as well as the curricula of the several schools and colleges show evidence of engaging students in serious intellectual effort of collecting, analyzing and communicating information as well as of engaging students in various modes of inquiry and creative work. There is clear evidence of efforts to engage students in the complexity of human diversity and in rapidly changing social, ecological and technical environments. Interviews with students and several surveys confirm that students feel so engaged.

- Flyers and brochures listing examples of student research at the UG level (guided research), FSSE results, opportunities for independent research credit, Grants and Research Office records, the digital repository of UST Research Online, all provide
evidence of a living effort to foster scholarship. Faculty report that the discovery of knowledge and other creative efforts are valued and expected, both as contributors to effective teaching as well as to one’s professional and community obligations.

Core Component 3C: The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.

Subcomponent 2. All instructors are appropriately credentialed, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Subcomponent 3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Subcomponent 4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

Subcomponent 5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Subcomponent 6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Team Determination: ___ Core Component is met
        ____ Core Component is met with concerns
        ____ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- There is an overall student to faculty ratio of 14:1. Over half of the faculty is full time; however, there is a considerable number of part time faculty, 400. The number of part-time faculty is expected to decline significantly in the future. The faculty interviewed assured the team that the evaluation processes as indicated in the faculty handbook are followed. Faculty performance is evaluated regularly and the institution provides a rich variety of resources for faculty development.
- Faculty credentials examined from a random selection of files were adequate. The faculty handbook describes criteria for hiring that would ensure subject matter competency, and outside accrediting agencies’ reports indicate that the faculty is of a high quality and sufficient number.
- The 2012 College Senior Survey indicates 93.2% of students satisfied with faculty contact. Faculty have the right to determine their own times and methods of being available to students. An interview with Student Support Services, Athletics, Student Life, Campus Live, and the VP of Student Affairs revealed a strong and well used support system for students and a well qualified support staff to oversee student services.
Core Component 3D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Subcomponent 1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

Subcomponent 3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Subcomponent 4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution’s offerings).

Subcomponent 5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

Team Determination:  
_x Core Component is met  
__ Core Component is met with concerns  
__ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- An examination of the credentials of the directors in Academic Support Services showed that they are properly qualified. Interviews with Academic Support Services personnel revealed that the staffs are committed to serving students effectively. There is one person in ADA. There is one full time director for math tutoring who oversees a large group of part time and student tutors. The Writing Across the Curriculum services has a reputation for doing an excellent job with a small staff. Academic Support Services make good use of placement testing and make low cost developmental courses available. The team of reference librarians and library staff seems to be adequate and is involving more students in learning how to best use the resources available. There is a realization that admission to St. Thomas does not eliminate the need for guidance at the very beginning.

- The infrastructure of the institution effectively supports teaching, learning and creative work. Library services are strong and laboratories and studios are adequate but in need of updating in some instances that are noted in the self-study. Residence halls are functional and attractive. The relatively new student center and sports complex offer superior environments for the students. As with most institutions of higher education there are some deferred maintenance issues, but these are relatively modest and have been identified and there are plans for addressing them.

- The University of St. Thomas makes use of two-tiered or shared advising model. There is a professional advisor for the student before that student declares a major. The student is assigned a faculty advisor after declaring a major. As noted earlier in the report, surveys show that students are largely satisfied with the advising they receive.

Core Component 3E: The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational
environment.

**Subcomponent 1.** Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution’s mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.

**Subcomponent 2.** The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students’ educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

**Team Determination:**  
_x Core Component is met  
__ Core Component is met with concerns  
__ Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

- Students and faculty work together on research projects as seen in published brochures and online sources. There are also a strong honors programs promoting academic excellence and promoting the mission of the university.
- The University established an Office of Community Engagement in 2006 as part of its long-standing programming in service learning. Lunches with student leaders gave the team an opportunity to hear of the positive impact of the addition of these programs. Those same lunches also provided evidence of the positive effects of strengthening the athletics programs and the school’s support for student athletes.
- Evidence of St. Thomas’ identity as a Catholic institution of higher education is clear in all aspects of the university, from its mission statement to the many curricular and co-curricular programs that it sponsors and the policies and procedures that it promulgates. The Catholic tradition of the dual and equal importance of faith and reason is honored at this institution of higher learning.

**Team Determination on Criterion Three:**  
_x Criterion is met  
__ Criterion is met with concerns  
__ Criterion is not met

**Summary Statement on Criterion:**

The University of St. Thomas provides its students with strong programs of study that require much more than the acquisition of information. Faculty and support staff as well as the facilities of the institution foster intellectual development, creativity, and appreciation of diversity and the complexities of the human condition. Students have the opportunity to develop the habits and skills that will be needed for a full and productive life as members of the human community as well the skills and knowledge they will need for jobs and careers.

Student services and policies related to graduate education are decentralized. Appropriately, the institution has concerns about the financial efficiency of decentralized graduate administration. In fact, a number of individuals raised questions about the model currently used. However, centralization of services may not always be an appropriate response to concerns about financial efficiency. Because services to graduate students
provided by college-level career services, placement, and other offices are so robust, the
institution must balance its inherent interest in effectiveness with concerns about efficiency.
In other words, the institution will need to answer for itself whether it can better achieve its
mission through the efficiency offered by a graduate school located at some point on the
centralization spectrum without sacrificing the effectiveness of services currently provided to
graduate students and program faculty.

As part of its effort to continue to provide an enriched educational environment into the
future, the institution needs to come to terms with how it will use and support educational
technology in terms of online and blended learning environments at both the undergraduate
and graduate levels. The use of new technology is perhaps the most rapidly changing
dimension in higher education today. The University of St. Thomas has been slow in
addressing the possibilities and challenges in this realm.

**CRITERION FOUR: Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.** The
institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs,
learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for
student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

**Core Component 4A:** The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its
educational programs.

- **Subcomponent 1.** The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
- **Subcomponent 2.** The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it
  awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.
- **Subcomponent 3.** The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in
  transfer.
- **Subcomponent 4.** The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for
courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and
faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual
credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels
of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
- **Subcomponent 5.** The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as
appropriate to its educational purposes.
- **Subcomponent 6.** The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures
that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or
employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems
appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree
programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace
Corps and AmeriCorps).

**Team Determination:**

- Core Component is met
- Core Component is met with concerns
- Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**
The university uses a comprehensive, two-pronged program review process to ensure all academic programs are subject to continuous improvement processes. If a program is accredited by an external agency the review process of such accreditation serves to satisfy institutional program review requirements. All other programs are covered by the university program review process. The Provost confirmed the program review process followed by the institution, and the Assessment and Accreditation Liaison Officer (AALO) supplied the team the master schedule of program reviews, along with the newly developed program review guidelines. In addition, the team reviewed the format/content of the program review self-study, noted the process included periodic updates and team meetings, as well as an external reviewer component with an on-campus site visit. Examples of completed program reviews were offered on the institutional SharePoint site.

The team confirmed the university recognizes and supports external accreditation as a mechanism to address academic quality and integrity consistent with institutional goals and strategic initiatives. It was reported a collaborative model between the academic dean and the chief academic officer is utilized in determining if external accreditation should be sought. The institution provided the team access to submitted self-study documents as well as findings and actions of specialized accreditation agencies. The team notes the institution is utilizing specialized program accreditation to ensure continuous improvement processes are embedded in its regular program review process. Currently there is involvement with ten external accreditors covering multiple programs.

Throughout numerous meetings during the team visit, the faculty reported careful oversight and responsibility for all courses offered by academic departments. They affirmed that faculty at the university had complete responsibility for maintaining appropriate prerequisite foundations and the required course rigor at every course level. The team reviewed the university process for creating new academic programs, new credit-bearing certificates, or other significant program restructuring/changes. The processes were confirmed with the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees during team sessions. It was reported the process was transparent and institutional communications has improved through the streamlining of the proposal approval process.

The university reviews and evaluates all credit it transcripts, including prior course work completed by transfer students. This oversight is significant as the total number of transfer credits earned and submitted for review continues to increase. The university has clearly articulated standards for transferability of credit and maintains a listing of transfer courses that meet core, major and minor course requirements. The Office of Admissions uses a Transfer Credit Tool which is hosted on the St. Thomas Admission Office website. This tool provides a comprehensive listing of transfer courses. It was reported by various academic department chairs and program directors that ultimate authority as to acceptance and application of transfer credit rests with the academic department or school. The team confirmed with the Assessment and Accreditation Liaison Officer (AALO) that the university does not offer PSEO credits for high school students but does accept such credits earned from other institutions.

The Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) confirmed to the team that each graduate program is responsible for developing and managing transfer issues subject to the university’s Non-Degree Policy promulgated by the GCC. That policy, posted in the Graduate Policy Library, indicates a maximum of one-third of graduate program requirements can be transferred to the university.
The university collects information regarding graduate success in a decentralized manner. The primary collection process is embedded within the university program review process discussed herein, including external accreditation reports, and within academic assessment plans. As a result, the findings are mixed in details and reporting strategies. As was reported in the submitted self-study and repeated during the visit, the institution does review data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. As the preponderance of students at the university are locally derived such data provide a reasonable snapshot of employment patterns of university graduates.

**Core Component 4B:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

- **Subcomponent 1.** The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
- **Subcomponent 2.** The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
- **Subcomponent 3.** The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
- **Subcomponent 4.** The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

**Team Determination:**

- ___ Core Component is met
- X Core Component is met with concerns
- ___ Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

- As discussed in the self-study and confirmed during the team visit, the University of St. Thomas has endeavored since the 2003 HLC comprehensive visit and self-study to improve its assessment process and build a cultural of meaningful assessment. A review of university assessment policy, and interviews with the Academic Assessment and Accreditation Liaison Officer (AALO) and the University Assessment Committee, confirms such effort has been deliberate and remains ongoing with significant steps initiated by the institution ensuring faculty engagement with the assessment process.
- The team confirmed the university established an Academic Assessment Office in 2011 in order to strengthen its assessment efforts. The Office is directed by the AALO who coordinates the university academic assessment program and reports to the Executive Vice President and Provost. A review of the university Academic Assessment Plan (AAP), most recently revised April 26th, 2013, indicates the AALO has significant coordination responsibilities designed to advise, support, and administer assessment and program review at the institution. However, as stated in the self-study, and confirmed by the team in various interviews, at the University of St. Thomas each academic dean is accountable for all assessment and continuous improvement activities in her/his school or college. As such, the Academic Assessment Office has no formal authority to ensure compliance of the university assessment program or implementation.
of any program improvement findings. Such authority resides with the Provost. It is clear that some academic units have been slow in adopting assessment plans and conducting assessments of student learning.

- The institution utilizes external accreditation guidelines for assessment of student learning in all programs with specialized accreditation. Exhibits of accreditation reports, self-studies and agency findings were provided to the team for review. The 2011 procurement of the Tk20 assessment software created an assessment platform for the College of Arts and Sciences to utilize. The Tk20 program allows for each department/program to document major learning goals, post results along with departmental analysis, recommendations and actions. The team reviewed samples of submitted annual department findings and recommendations as well as the Tk20 implementation schedule which calls for full implementation by the completion of the 2014-15 academic year. The AALO administers the Tk20 program and reports the implementation schedule remains timely. When fully implemented the adoption of the Tk20 platform will serve as a mechanism to collect assessment data and document actions of meaningful continuous program improvement in the college.

- The team reviewed samples of submitted assessment planning documents in the Tk20 assessment program and in various accreditation self-studies on file and noted the learning goals in each assessment plan are rigorous and the measures utilized appropriate to the mission of the institution.

- The team confirmed the institution has a Core Curriculum, organized in 9 curricular areas with 13 learning goals. The Core Curriculum is required in all bachelor degrees awarded by the University of St. Thomas and Core requirement details are provided in the university catalog. Components of the Core have been assessed through the years, most recently by participation in the Collegiate Learning Assessment, but currently no formal assessment plan for the Core is in place. The Academic Assessment Plan (APP) reviewed by the team, and referenced herein, indicates oversight and assessment of the Core is assigned to the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC). During the visit, it was reported to the team that a draft of an assessment plan for the Core was in development by the CCC, with the goal of approval of the same during the current academic year. If approved, implementation would commence with the 2014–15 academic year with an intended rotation of assessment activities for all 13 learning goals in a multiple-year assessment plan.

- As reported in the current self-study and verified in discussions during the visit, the Academic Assessment Plan (AAP) indicates the university follows a decentralized process wherein the dean is responsible for all assessment, evaluation, and improvement activities in the school or college. In this process, the dean is responsible for appointing an assessment coordinator who serves on the University Assessment Committee. The assessment coordinator is to submit assessment reports and plans, including an every five-year cumulative assessment report. As this is a new process no five-year summary plans have been prepared/submitted to date. In addition, the team notes there is no formal indication in the process for documenting how the institution confirms the school or college “closes the loop” with its assessment findings.

- An excellent example of assessment in a co-curricular learning activity was provided to the team by the office of the Alumni Association. Specifically, the Student-Alumni Mentoring program was explained and documentation of survey/trend analysis was presented. Based on survey findings showing a decrease in satisfaction reported by the participants the office recommended adjustments to the program. Plans for follow-up review are embedded in the annual review of the program. Such action represents an example of good practice in the process of program review and improvement.
• The institution continues to strive to build a culture of meaningful assessment of student learning. The 2011 formation of the Academic Assessment Office with the creation/staffing of the Academic Assessment and Accreditation Liaison Officer has enabled the institution to move forward with academic assessment although, as reported in the self-study, not all academic departments/programs have assessment plans in place. The team also notes the Academic Assessment Office has only coordination responsibilities. With no actual authority conferred there is no university assessment office or official in place, other than perhaps in the person of the Provost who has numerous other responsibilities, to ensure compliance with the university assessment program or the actual implementation of assessment findings for program improvement. The institution would benefit from enhancing the university assessment structure so that such authority is in place and ensures the assessment loop is closed.

• The institution has a Core Curriculum (Core) which is required in all bachelor degrees awarded by St. Thomas. Currently there is no formal assessment plan in place for the Core. The Core Curriculum Committee is responsible for oversight and assessment of the Core and reported to the team that an assessment plan for the Core was in development. The institution needs to finalize and implement a formal assessment plan for the Core. As the Core is organized in 9 curricular areas with 13 learning goals a multiple-year rotation schedule is likely needed. Such action will demonstrate commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Core Component 4C: The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

Subcomponent 2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

Subcomponent 3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Subcomponent 4. The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Team Determination: _x Core Component is met
__ Core Component is met with concerns
__ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

• As discussed in the self-study and confirmed during the site visit, the University of St. Thomas has put in place a number of practices in support of student success. These include comprehensive orientation programs, academic and personal counseling services, career development services, the Fall Leadership Institute, numerous student clubs, community service programs, and health and wellness services and programs.
Student participation and satisfaction is evaluated annually to provide updates and improvements on services and programs offered.

- The collaborative FLAG program brings together the offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to develop and implement early warning strategies and appropriate intervention plans for individual students identified as at-risk. As was reported to the team during interviews with FLAG representatives, the process utilizes a team approach, with immediate referrals to appropriate student support services.

- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) collects detailed information on student retention, persistence, and completion rates of university degree and certificate programs. The Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Patterns (2000 – 2009) report provides detailed analysis of collected data and reflects an institutional commitment to utilizing information on student retention and completion patterns to make improvements in programs and services offered by the university. In addition, the OIE has formulated an institutional scorecard to provide comparison analysis against other four-year institutions to develop strategies to further improve retention, persistence and graduation rates at St. Thomas.

- Team members reviewed institutional graduate catalogs/handbooks and discussed retention strategies and goals with various graduate program directors, confirming the institution has in place appropriate practices and oversight at the graduate level to support data-informed program improvement decision-making.

Team Determination on Criterion Four:

___ Criterion is met
x Criterion is met with concerns
___ Criterion is not met

Summary Statement on Criterion:

Core Component 4B is met but with concern as noted. Progress is needed in assessment of the core curriculum. Also, a few academic departments have been slow in developing assessment plans and evidence of student learning, and there is need for an organizational structure to better oversee and coordinate all assessment work.

The team’s review of documentation and its discussions with faculty, students, staff, and administrators revealed a rich learning environment at the University of St. Thomas. The commitment to educational achievement is documented by quality assurance processes applicable to its educational programs, learning environments and student support services although the actual use of the assessments being done remains unclear.

The university reviews and evaluates all credit it transcripts with ultimate authority of acceptance residing with faculty within the appropriate department or school. It has a robust program review process for all programs that are not subject to external accreditation. The review is conducted every ten years and includes an internal self-study and an external peer reviewer. The institution might profit from shortening the ten year cycle to ensure academic currency in the reviewed programs. Additionally, the institution recognizes and supports external accreditation as a
mechanism to ensure continuous improvement processes are embedded in many of its professional programs which are central to its mission.

The institution might consider greater integration of the Core with co-curricular activities to enhance students’ understanding of the overarching objectives of the Core.

CRITERION FIVE: Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness. The institution’s resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

Core Component 5A: The institution’s resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

   Subcomponent 1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

   Subcomponent 2. The institution’s resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

   Subcomponent 3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution’s organization, resources, and opportunities.

   Subcomponent 4. The institution’s staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.

   Subcomponent 5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

Team Determination:  _x Core Component is met
                      ___ Core Component is met with concerns
                      ___ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- A review of various financial records for the University of St. Thomas and conversations with University administrators revealed that fiscal discipline has characterized the University’s operations for many years. This discipline has helped the University develop a stable financial base through a difficult economic period in higher education. University audits and financial reports show evidence of fiscal strength that includes balanced budgets, excellent composite financial index scores and financial ratios, and a reasonable level of long-term debt compared to net institutional assets. The increase in total net assets for the University averaged annual growth of almost 7% during the past decade, which is an excellent standard. As noted in the self-study report and confirmed by University administrators, the downward trend in graduate enrollments poses a challenge to the University’s fiscal picture, but the new strategic planning process that is about to begin will address program mix with an eye toward increasing graduate enrollments.
• Conversations with faculty, staff, and administrators, and a review of financial records for the University of St. Thomas showed educational purposes drive budget and expenditure decisions. The University embraces a view of higher education which is holistic in focus and that informs resources allocation for academic programming, student development activities, and facilities management. Discussions with faculty and staff revealed that the University provides significant funding for faculty and staff development oriented toward realizing the institution’s mission and strategic vision. For example, the University provides more than $1 million annually for scholarly support for faculty.

• As evidenced by a review of the University's publications (including the web site) and the University’s planning and budgeting documents, the goals of the University of the St. Thomas mission statement are realistic and attainable. The self-study resources showed many examples of a continuous quality improvement ethos fostered by a culture of enhancing excellence and prudent resource allocation. Two of the foremost examples include the University’s campus master plan and facilities master plan. As confirmed by discussions with the chief financial officer and AVP for facilities, these plans are the result of the thoughtful and intentional planning activities that encompass both strategic and annual operational planning efforts. Plans for comprehensive property development inform the direction and investments in facilities to which the University commits its resources. The University is also opportunistic in its planning through connecting benefactor priorities (as they are made known) with facilities investments and operations. Through these examples and conversations with faculty, staff, and administrators, it is clear that the University of St. Thomas is planning effectively, realistically, opportunistically, and sensibly for the future.

• A review of staff job descriptions and operational budgets and discussions with staff and administrators demonstrated that the University of St. Thomas staff are appropriately credentialed and educated. Staff and administrators reported that the University invests in their professional development by providing ongoing training that enhances their effectiveness.

• The University of St. Thomas has a long history of quality practices in budgeting, finance, and expense tracking. According to discussions with the chief financial officer and departmental directors, the University’s budgeting processes provides adequate oversight of annual expenditures. University processes ensure that programmatic expenses are reported and monitored in real-time and that campus leaders have access to information that informs resource utilization.

• As evidenced in the self-study report and confirmed in conversations with members of the Board of Trustees and the University administration, the University of St. Thomas completed its successful Open Doors capital campaign that exceeded its $500 million goal by $15 million. Development staff noted that the success of the campaign was due to the broad community support for the University. The results of the campaign will position the University well as it begins its new strategic planning process.

Core Component 5B: The institution’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

Subcomponent 1. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal
constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution’s governance.

**Subcomponent 2.** The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight for the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

**Subcomponent 3.** The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

**Team Determination:**

- x Core Component is met
- _ Core Component is met with concerns
- _ Core Component is not met

**Evidence:**

- A review of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees revealed that the board has authority to oversee and direct the various financial and physical resources of the University of St. Thomas. The board’s Audit/Finance Committee reviews and endorses the annual budget for the University. In addition, the committee oversees and accepts the annual audit on behalf of the institution.
- As evidenced by a review of the Bylaws and discussion with the trustees, the Board of Trustees of the University of St. Thomas demonstrates self-perpetuating independence and oversight of the University operations. In addition, the board has appropriately delegated authority to administrators, faculty, and staff for the daily operations of the University.
- A review of board meeting minutes and conversations with trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff provided evidence of great collaboration and trust among the various governance levels. The many levels of governance use fiscal and other operational information that are shared widely. The board approves the strategic direction of the University, and the president and the leadership team have oversight for implementing that vision in the daily operations of the University.
- The University of St. Thomas has policies and practices in place to ensure that the faculty, staff, administrators, and students can provide input in the process of setting institutional priorities. Conversations with administrators and faculty provided examples of utilizing feedback from faculty and students to make adjustments in academic and co-curricular programs. Conversations with administrators and staff described the processes by which such input can be filtered and analyzed.
- As evidenced by a review of the self-study report and as confirmed in meetings with faculty and program directors, the University of St. Thomas has an excellent track record of developing collaborative programming through its centers and institutes. The various centers and institutes of the university embody an interdisciplinary approach to outreach that takes academic strengths of the university and applies them in community-oriented programming. Discussions with those involved with the centers and institutes revealed a true passion for their work. These centers represent some of the most dynamic efforts of the University of St. Thomas to provide programming that is meaningful to the communities in which the university is engaged.
Core Component 5C: The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

Subcomponent 1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

Subcomponent 2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Subcomponent 3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

Subcomponent 4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution’s sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.

Subcomponent 5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

Team Determination: _x Core Component is met
__ Core Component is met with concerns
__ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- A review of the self-study report, planning documents, and conversations with the president and trustees revealed that the Board of Trustees of the University of St. Thomas is significantly involved in the strategic planning processes of the University. Since the initiation of the most recent strategic plan for the University, the trustees have regularly participated in planning activities and have received planning updates from across the institution.

- An analysis of the University operating budget and discussion with the president, faculty, and staff indicated that the University of St, Thomas aligns its resource base with its mission and strategic vision. For example, budget documents indicate that the University spends almost $13,000 annually per full-time equivalent student on instructional expenses, an average which is comparable to other Catholic universities and better than similar institutions within the University’s Carnegie classification. The alignment between mission and the University’s resource base is enhanced by a strong budgeting process that incorporates input at appropriate organizational levels, including students, faculty, administration, and trustees. According to interviews with the institutional effectiveness staff, the University utilizes environmental and SWOT analyses as part of the annual planning process, and those analyses drive the construction of annual budget for University programs.

- A review of University documents such as the annual budget and conversations with the president, faculty, staff, and members of the Board of Trustees indicated that the University of St. Thomas uses a budgeting process that is mission-focused and appropriate to the University’s culture. Individuals reported that the process for devising the budget is the product of efforts that emphasize transparency and openness across the institution. Budgets are created out of the SWOT analyses conducted each year as part of the University’s planning process. Program and department budgets, as part of the overall institutional budget, must receive approvals at appropriate faculty and administrative levels. In addition, the
Audit/Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees must endorse the University budget, and, pending that endorsement, the whole board must vote approval of the institutional budget.

- Through review of strategic planning documents and conversations with trustees and the president, the leadership of the University of St. Thomas demonstrated many instances of fusing a sound understanding of the University’s resource capacity with its vision. The excellent work in facilities management shows that capacity and costs have been controlled wisely. Development of facilities has blended strategic imperatives of the University with sound fiscal management. In addition, internal processes allow for adjustments to the University budget during the fiscal year. The result has been an approach to resource allocation that is as flexible as University needs warrant based on any number of operational conditions that may develop.

- As evidenced in the self-study report and confirmed in interviews with the chief financial officer and AVP for facilities, the University of St. Thomas uses classroom utilization formula method that help determine how formal learning spaces are scheduled. The schools of the University track space utilization and determine course schedules so that space usage is optimized depending on days of the week and times of the day that spaces are to be reserved.

- A review of facilities planning and information technology resources and interviews with faculty and staff indicated that the University of St. Thomas has made admirable investments in enhancing its technology infrastructure. The University has implemented accessible wireless support for students, faculty, staff, and guests. Classroom technology is appropriate and mostly current. In several buildings, informal learning spaces have been developed that students can use spontaneously. Most importantly, staff members in areas of technology, particularly the Information Resources and Technology and library staff, are superb campus leaders at enhancing technology skills of colleagues and developing technical tools and resources.

Core Component 5D: The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

Subcomponent 1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

Subcomponent 2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

Team Determination: _x Core Component is met

___ Core Component is met with concerns

___ Core Component is not met

Evidence:

- As outlined in the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees and confirmed in discussions with the trustees and administrators, the governing board of the University of St. Thomas has responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of the institution. This evaluation is accomplished through regular review of the University’s performance on academic,
financial, and other measures. The board monitors data and leadership to foster continuous quality improvement.

- Discussions with facilities personnel and a review of planning documents revealed that the University of St. Thomas utilizes a dynamic campus master plan and facilities plan that enhance property and facilities development. The Board of Trustees and University administrators constantly evaluate the implementation of these plans in order to optimize facilities usage and growth. The plans may be amended by trustees and administrators as needs of the institution dictate.

- According to interviews with faculty and staff, the annual academic reporting process provides useful information to improve departmental performance. The reports have been developed in collaboration between the schools and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The reporting process provides evidence of the effectiveness of planning and budgeting as those functions contribute to departmental outcomes. However, assessment data on student learning outcomes needs to become a more significant aspect of this planning process.

- As revealed in conversations with trustees, administrators and staff, and students, the University of St. Thomas monitors the campus environment to create a holistically developmental experience for students. Faculty and academic leaders evaluate the effectiveness of academic space and services. The student development staff work collaboratively with students to provide services that students consider meaningful to their lives.

- According to interviews with the chief financial officer and AVP for facilities, the University invests between $300,000 and $500,000 annually in upgrades to residential spaces. These improvements are identified through input from residential staff and incorporate direct contributions from students.

- According to discussions with the faculty, the Institutional Review Board has implemented a number of changes that have improved campus procedures related to research. Faculty state that the implementation of IRB Net has increased the number of reviews of research projects and the quality of submissions. These faculty indicated that there is much greater awareness among faculty and students about the ethical implications of research methods and plans, and that the applications submitted for review are completed more thoroughly for board consideration. Faculty report the efforts of the IRB directly led to an improvement in the research review protocols of the University and campus knowledge about scholarly activities.

**Team Determination on Criterion Five:**

- _x_ Criterion is met
- ___ Criterion is met with concerns
- ___ Criterion is not met

**Summary Statement on Criterion:**

The University of St. Thomas has a sufficient resource base to accomplish its mission. Resources are managed effectively via external audits, Trustee oversight, and internal reporting and auditing procedures. The institution has effective leadership from Trustees, central administration, and qualified faculty and staff. Its governance structures invite input.
from both internal and external sources and transparency has improved since the last comprehensive visit, and there is good reason to believe that this trend will continue. Planning for the future is systematic and integrated as the institution works to stabilize and enhance its future in an environment for higher education that is changing rapidly.

V. TEAM RECOMMENDATION

A. Affiliation Status

1. **Recommendation**: Reaffirmation of Accreditation

2. **Timing for Next Reaffirmation Evaluation**: 2023-24

3. **Rationale**: The University of St. Thomas is a mature institution with a clear mission, a stable financial base, sound educational programs, and strong leadership from faculty and administrators. A monitoring report on assessment of student learning is justified but no other actions are warranted at this time since all criteria are met.

4. **Criterion-related Monitoring Required**

   Monitoring Report: Criterion Four

   Monitoring report on (1) the overall structure of assessment planning and internal reporting arrangements and authority, and (2) on progress on assessment of student learning, particularly in the core curriculum, including an assessment plan, evidence and follow up on any areas of concern. Progress should also be reported for academic units that have not yet developed and implemented a mature assessment program.

   Due: November 1, 2017

   Rationale: The institution has continued to build a culture of meaningful assessment but it has not yet fully implemented its academic assessment plan. Several programs and departments need to finalize assessment plans in the Tk20 platform, with appropriate learning goals and measurements. The Core Curriculum Assessment Plan needs to be finalized, approved, and put into operational status. Finally, the institution needs to refine its assessment process to document how appropriate follow-up action is taken after evaluating its assessment data.

   The monitoring report should offer documentation to show all academic programs and departments are engaging in meaningful assessment of student learning. It should show how program improvements are evidenced by analysis of assessment data and outline the processes where follow-up action is documented. Finally, the report should include a detailed section on the completed and approved Core Assessment Plan, including all implantation steps initiated to date, and those planned in subsequent academic years.

5. **Federal Compliance Monitoring Required (report, focused visit):**

   Monitoring: None
Rationale:

B. Commission Sanction or Adverse Action

None

VI. EMBEDDED CHANGES IN AFFILIATION STATUS

Did the team review any of the following types of change in the course of its evaluation? Check Yes or No for each type of change.

( ) Yes ( x ) No Legal Status
( ) Yes ( x ) No Degree Level
( ) Yes ( x ) No Program Change
( ) Yes ( x ) No Distance or Correspondence Education
( ) Yes ( x ) No Contractual or Consortial Arrangements
( ) Yes ( x ) No Mission or Student Body
( ) Yes ( x ) No Clock or Credit Hour
( ) Yes ( x ) No Additional Locations or Campuses
( ) Yes ( x ) No Access to Notification
( ) Yes ( x ) No Access to Expedited Desk Review
( ) Yes ( x ) No Teach-out Arrangement
( ) Yes ( x ) No Other Change

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND EXPLANATIONS

None
Appendix A

Interactions with Constituencies

Administration

Academic Affairs Staff (8)
Academic Deans (6)
Academic Support Services Personnel (9)
Alumni and Constituent Relations Staff (5)
Assessment of Student Learning Personnel (12)
AVP Undergraduate Studies and Academic Advisement
Centers and Institutes Personnel (11)
Community Engagement Personnel (12)
Counseling and Psychological Services Staff (3)
Criterion Five Subcommittee (6)
Development Office Staff (7)
Directors and Administrators Graduate Admissions (13)
Diversity Personnel (7)
Executive V.P. and Provost
External Advisory Committee Personnel (8)
Facilities Staff (2)
Financial Aid Staff (5)
Grants and Research Office Staff and Faculty Advisors (8)
Institutional Effectiveness Staff (2)
Interim Accreditation Liaison Officer
International Programs and Global Initiatives Personnel (8)
Library Personnel (8)
Members of Board of Trustees (7)
Off Campus Programs Staff (4)
Office of Finance Staff (2)
Office of Mission and Campus Ministry Staff (3)
Online Programs Personnel, including Bisk representatives (11)
President
Public Safety Staff (4)
St. Paul Seminary and School of Divinity Staff (3)
Self-Study Steering Committee (9)
Service Learning Personnel (15)
Staff Open Meeting (10)
Student Affairs Staff (4)
Student Retention Personnel (21)
Technology Personnel (4)
Undergraduate Admissions Staff (4)
University Relations and Graduate Marketing Personnel (3)

Faculty and Students

Core Curriculum Committee (11)
Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate (4)
Faculty Affairs Committee (6)
Faculty Development Committee (9)
Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee (7)
Graduate Curriculum Committee (9)
Graduate Student Leaders (19)
Institutional Review Board (10)
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (15)
Undergraduate Student Leaders (16)
Appendix B
Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed

2013 Self-Study
2003 Report on Comprehensive Visit
Undergraduate Catalog
Graduate Catalogs
Employee Handbook
HLC Institutional History
UST Board of Trustees List
Board of Trustees Manual – Roles and Responsibilities
Conflict of Interest Annual Disclosure Statement for Trustees, Officers and Key Employees
Board of Trustees Manual – Committees
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes-select
Mission Perception Inventory 2008
CIRP College Senior Survey 2012
Campus Climate Survey Results 2013
Board of Governors/Advisors Lists – all colleges and schools
Academic Assessment Plan
Tk20 Sample Assessment reports
Shared Governance Evaluation Report 2011
Strategic Diversity Action Plan 2007-2010
National Survey of Student Engagement 2011
COACHE Provost Survey 2012
Assignment of credit hours worksheets
Transfer Policies
Proposed Capital Projects 2014-2020
Institutional Snapshot
Undergraduate Course Descriptions – a sample
Graduate Course Descriptions – a sample
Campus Crime and Fire Logs and USDOE OPE crime data
Bisk Education contract, HLC approval document
University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine consortial agreement for social work programs
Student complaint and institutional follow up files
Faculty credential files – a sample
Faculty/Staff Grievance Policies
Percentage Change Climate Themes 2007-13
Core Curriculum Task Force Final Report
Faculty Credential Requirements
Student Satisfaction with Faculty Advising Report 2012
Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Patterns 2000-2009
Human Diversity Student Survey, 2011
Professional Accreditation Documents: ABA, AACSB, ABET, APA, ACS
University of Saint Thomas website
Websites for Schools and Colleges
Strategic Priorities: Planning for the Future
By-laws of the University of Saint Thomas Board of Trustees
University organization chart
Institutional update 2012-2013
Institutional update 2012-2013 – Composite Financial Index
Institutional update 2011-2012
Institutional update 2011-2013 – Composite Financial Index
Financial statements and single audit compliance reports 2012
Audit updates from Larson Allen 2012
Financial statements and single audit compliance reports 2011
Change in enrollment headcount since Fall 2003 table
Change in full-time equivalent enrollment since Fall 2003 table
Undergraduate and graduate enrollment trends since 2002 table
Budget approval calendar
Budget advisory committee list
2013-2014 undergraduate costs sheet
Institutional effectiveness model
Administrative annual planning process model
Tommie Almanac 2012
The Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services brochure
The Muslim-Christian Dialogue Center brochure
TommieMedia website
Saint Thomas magazine Spring 2012
Undergraduate core curriculum outline
Academic Program and Support Unit review Process
Student Affairs Annual Report 2011 – 2012
College Senior Survey
CAS Tk20 Implementation Report
2012 -13 Department Report – Communication and Journalism
Alumni Survey
Major Graduate Curriculum Proposal – Flow Chart
Major Undergraduate Curriculum Proposal – Flow Chart
Program Review – Master Schedule
Program Review Self-Study (Academic Programs)
Student Alumni Mentoring Handbook
External Program Review Disability Resources AHEAD
Code of Professional Conduct Policy
Business Office Policies
Taking Care of Business Policy
Red Flags Rule
Controller’s Office Policies
Purchasing Services Policies
Triennial Report Shared Governance 2009
Community Members Policy
Travel Policy
Description of Staff Councils
HEA Student Consumer Information
UST Bylaws Amended
Price Study Task Force Report
Grants Office Programs
Undergraduate Research Report
University of St. Thomas Magazine Fall 2013
Appendix C
Federal Compliance Worksheet for Evaluation Teams
Effective September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014

Evaluation of Federal Compliance Components

The team reviews each item identified in the Federal Compliance Guide and documents its findings in the appropriate spaces below. Teams should expect institutions to address these requirements with brief narrative responses and provide supporting documentation, where necessary. Generally, if the team finds in the course of this review that there are substantive issues related to the institution’s ability to fulfill the Criteria for Accreditation, such issues should be raised in appropriate sections of the Assurance Section of the Team Report or highlighted as such in the appropriate AQIP Quality Checkup Report.

This worksheet outlines the information the team should review in relation to the federal requirements and provides spaces for the team’s conclusions in relation to each requirement. The team should refer to the Federal Compliance Guide for Institutions and Evaluation Teams in completing this worksheet. The Guide identifies applicable Commission policies and an explanation of each requirement. The worksheet becomes an appendix to the team’s report. If the team recommends monitoring on a Federal Compliance requirement in the form of a report or focused visit, it should be included in the Federal Compliance monitoring sections below and added to the appropriate section in the team report template.

Institution under review:
University of St. Thomas

Assignment of Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Address this requirement by completing the “Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution’s Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours” in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

The institution has documented a process in place for addressing student complaints and appears to be systematically processing such complaints as evidenced by the data on student complaints since the last comprehensive evaluation.

1. Review the process that the institution uses to manage complaints as well as the history of complaints received and processed with a particular focus in that history on the past three or four years.
2. Determine whether the institution has a process to review and resolve complaints in a timely manner.
3. Verify that the evidence shows that the institution can, and does, follow this process and that it is able to integrate any relevant findings from this process into its review and planning processes.
4. Advise the institution of any improvements that might be appropriate.
5. Consider whether the record of student complaints indicates any pattern of complaints or otherwise raises concerns about the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation or Assumed Practices.
6. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:
The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Publication of Transfer Policies

The institution has demonstrated it is appropriately disclosing its transfer policies to students and to the public. Policies contain information about the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions.

1. Review the institution’s transfer policies.

2. Review any articulation agreements the institution has in place, including articulation agreements at the institution level and program-specific articulation agreements.

3. Consider where the institution discloses these policies (e.g., in its catalog, on its website) and how easily current and prospective students can access that information.

Determine whether the disclosed information clearly explains the criteria the institution uses to make transfer decisions and any articulation arrangements the institution has with other institutions. Note whether the institution appropriately lists its articulation agreements with other institutions on its website or elsewhere. The information the institution provides should include any program-specific articulation agreements in place and should clearly identify program-specific articulation agreements as such. Also, the information the institution provides should include whether the articulation agreement anticipates that the institution under Commission review: 1) accepts credit from the other institution(s) in the articulation agreement; 2) sends credits to the other institution(s) in the articulation agreements that it accepts; or 3) both offers and accepts credits with the other institution(s).

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Practices for Verification of Student Identity
The institution has demonstrated that it verifies the identity of students who participate in courses or programs provided to the student through distance or correspondence education and appropriately discloses additional fees related to verification to students and to protect their privacy.

1. Determine how the institution verifies that the student who enrolls in a course is the same student who submits assignments, takes exams, and earns a final grade. The team should ensure that the institution’s approach respects student privacy.

2. Check that any fees related to verification and not included in tuition are explained to the students prior to enrollment in distance courses (e.g., a proctoring fee paid by students on the day of the proctored exam).

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:

   __x__  The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

   ___  The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___  The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

   ___  The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Title IV Program Responsibilities

The institution has presented evidence on the required components of the Title IV Program.

This requirement has several components the institution and team must address:

- **General Program Requirements.** The institution has provided the Commission with information about the fulfillment of its Title IV program responsibilities, particularly findings from any review activities by the Department of Education. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution’s fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area.

- **Financial Responsibility Requirements.** The institution has provided the Commission with information about the Department’s review of composite ratios and financial audits. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution’s fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion Five if an institution has significant issues with financial responsibility as demonstrated through ratios that are below acceptable levels or other financial responsibility findings by its auditor.)

- **Default Rates.** The institution has provided the Commission with information about its three year default rate. It has a responsible program to work with students to minimize default rates. It has, as necessary, addressed any issues the Department raised regarding the institution’s fulfillment of its responsibilities in this area. Note for 2012 and thereafter institutions and teams should be using the three-year default rate based on revised default rate data published by the Department in September 2012; if the institution does not provide the default rate for three years leading up to the comprehensive evaluation visit, the team should contact Commission staff.
- **Campus Crime Information, Athletic Participation and Financial Aid, and Related Disclosures.** The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution’s policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations.

- **Student Right to Know.** The institution has provided the Commission with information about its disclosures. It has demonstrated, and the team has reviewed, the institution’s policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The disclosures are accurate and provide appropriate information to students. (Note that the team should also be commenting under Criterion One if the team determines that disclosures are not accurate or appropriate.)

- **Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance.** The institution has provided the Commission with information about policies and practices for ensuring compliance with these regulations. The institution has demonstrated that the policies and practices meet state or federal requirements and that the institution is appropriately applying these policies and practices to students. In most cases, teams should verify that these policies exist and are available to students, typically in the course catalog or student handbook. Note that the Commission does not necessarily require that the institution take attendance but does anticipate that institutional attendance policies will provide information to students about attendance at the institution.

- **Contractual Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its contractual relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for contractual relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a contractual relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the change request form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Contractual Change Application on the Commission’s web site for more information.)

- **Consortial Relationships.** The institution has presented a list of its consortial relationships related to its academic program and evidence of its compliance with Commission policies requiring notification or approval for consortial relationships. (If the team learns that the institution has a consortial relationship that may require Commission approval and has not received Commission approval the team must require that the institution complete and file the form as soon as possible. The team should direct the institution to review the Consortial Change Application on the Commission’s web site for more information.)

1. Review all of the information that the institution discloses having to do with its Title IV program responsibilities.

2. Determine whether the Department has raised any issues related to the institution’s compliance or whether the institution’s auditor in the A-133 has raised any issues about the institution’s compliance as well as look to see how carefully and effectively the institution handles its Title IV responsibilities.

3. If an institution has been cited or is not handling these responsibilities effectively, indicate that finding within the federal compliance portion of the team report and whether the institution appears to be moving forward with corrective action that the Department has determined to be appropriate.

4. If issues have been raised with the institution’s compliance, decide whether these issues relate to the institution’s ability to satisfy the Criteria for Accreditation, particularly with regard to whether its disclosures to students are candid and complete and demonstrate appropriate integrity (*Core Component 2.A and 2.B*).

5. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:

   - **x** The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Required Information for Students and the Public

1. Verify that the institution publishes fair, accurate, and complete information on the following topics: the calendar, grading, admissions, academic program requirements, tuition and fees, and refund policies.

2. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:

- The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.
- The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.
- The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.
- The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Advertising and Recruitment Materials and Other Public Information

The institution has documented that it provides accurate, timely and appropriately detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its accreditation status with the Commission and other agencies as well as about its programs, locations and policies.

1. Review the institution’s disclosure about its accreditation status with the Commission to determine whether the information it provides is accurate and complete, appropriately formatted and contains the Commission’s web address.

2. Review institutional disclosures about its relationship with other accrediting agencies for accuracy and for appropriate consumer information, particularly regarding the link between specialized/professional accreditation and the licensure necessary for employment in many professional or specialized areas.

3. Review the institution’s catalog, brochures, recruiting materials, and information provided by the institution’s advisors or counselors to determine whether the institution provides accurate information to current and prospective students about its accreditation, placement or licensure, program requirements, etc.

4. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:
__x__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

__ The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Review of Student Outcome Data

1. Review the student outcome data the institution collects to determine whether it is appropriate and sufficient based on the kinds of academic programs it offers and the students it serves.

2. Determine whether the institution uses this information effectively to make decisions about academic programs and requirements and to determine its effectiveness in achieving its educational objectives.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:

__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements.

__x__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.

__ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.

__ The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments: Additional work needed on overall structure of planning and reporting on progress in assessment of student learning and on plan for and assessment of student learning outcomes in core curriculum

Additional monitoring, if any: Monitoring report due 2017-18

Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies

The institution has documented that it discloses accurately to the public and the Commission its relationship with any other specialized, professional or institutional accreditor and with all governing or coordinating bodies in states in which the institution may have a presence.

The team has considered any potential implications for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of sanction or loss of status by the institution with any other accrediting agency or loss of authorization in any state.

Important note: If the team is recommending initial or continued status, and the institution is now or has been in the past five years under sanction or show-cause with, or has received an adverse action (i.e., withdrawal, suspension, denial, or termination) from, any other federally recognized specialized
or institutional accreditor or a state entity, then the team must explain the sanction or adverse action of
the other agency in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report and provide its rationale for
recommending Commission status in light of this action. In addition, the team must contact the staff
liaison immediately if it learns that the institution is at risk of losing its degree authorization or lacks
such authorization in any state in which the institution meets state presence requirements.

1. Review the information, particularly any information that indicates the institution is under sanction or
show-cause or has had its status with any agency suspended, revoked, or terminated, as well as the
reasons for such actions.

2. Determine whether this information provides any indication about the institution’s capacity to meet
the Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation. Should the team learn that the institution is at risk of
losing, or has lost, its degree or program authorization in any state in which it meets state presence
requirements, it should contact the Commission staff liaison immediately.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:
   ___ x_ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to
   meet the Commission’s requirements.
   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to
   meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.
   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not
to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.
   ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for
Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).

Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Public Notification of Opportunity to Comment

The institution has made an appropriate and timely effort to solicit third party comments. The team has
evaluated any comments received and completed any necessary follow-up on issues raised in these
comments. Note that if the team has determined that any issues raised by third-party comment relate to
the team’s review of the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation, it must discuss this
information and its analysis in the body of the Assurance Section of the Team Report.

1. Review information about the public disclosure of the upcoming visit, including sample
announcements, to determine whether the institution made an appropriate and timely effort to notify
the public and seek comments.

2. Evaluate the comments to determine whether the team needs to follow-up on any issues through its
interviews and review of documentation during the visit process.

3. Check the appropriate response that reflects the team’s conclusions:
   ___ x_ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to
   meet the Commission’s requirements.
   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution to
   meet the Commission’s requirements but recommends Commission follow-up.
   ___ The team has reviewed this component of federal compliance and has found the institution not
to meet the Commission’s requirements and recommends Commission follow-up.
   ___ The team also has comments that relate to the institution’s compliance with the Criteria for
Accreditation. See Criterion (insert appropriate reference).
Comments:

Additional monitoring, if any: None

Institutional Materials Related to Federal Compliance Reviewed by the Team

Provide a list materials reviewed here:

- Assignment of credit hours worksheets
- Transfer Policies
- Institutional Snapshot
- Undergraduate Course Descriptions and Syllabi – a sample
- Graduate Course Descriptions and Syllabi – a sample
- Campus Crime and Fire Logs and USDOE OPE crime data
- Bisk Education contract, HLC approved
- University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine consortial agreement for social work programs
- Student complaint and institutional follow up files
Appendix C

Team Worksheet for Evaluating an Institution’s Program Length and Tuition, Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours

Institution under review:
St. Thomas University

Part 1: Program Length and Tuition

Instructions

The institution has documented that it has credit hour assignments and degree program lengths within the range of good practice in higher education and that tuition is consistent across degree programs (or that there is a rational basis for any program-specific tuition).

Review the “Worksheet for Use by Institutions on the Assignment of Credit Hours and on Clock Hours” as well as the course catalog and other attachments required for the institutional worksheet.

Worksheet on Program Length and Tuition

A. Answer the Following Questions

Are the institution’s degree program requirements within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

___x___ Yes  _____ No

Comments:

Are the institution’s tuition costs across programs within the range of good practice in higher education and contribute to an academic environment in which students receive a rigorous and thorough education?

___x___ Yes  _____ No

Comments:

B. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution’s program length and tuition practices?

_____ Yes  ____x__ No
Rationale:
Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

**Part 2: Assignment of Credit Hours**

**Instructions**

In assessing the appropriateness of the credit allocations provided by the institution the team should complete the following steps:

1. Review the Worksheet completed by the institution, which provides information about an institution’s academic calendar and an overview of credit hour assignments across institutional offerings and delivery formats, and the institution’s policy and procedures for awarding credit hours. Note that such policies may be at the institution or department level and may be differentiated by such distinctions as undergraduate or graduate, by delivery format, etc.

2. Identify the institution’s principal degree levels and the number of credit hours for degrees at each level. The following minimum number of credit hours should apply at a semester institution:
   - Associate’s degrees = 60 hours
   - Bachelor’s degrees = 120 hours
   - Master’s or other degrees beyond the Bachelor’s = at least 30 hours beyond the Bachelor’s degree
   - Note that one quarter hour = .67 semester hour
   - Any exceptions to this requirement must be explained and justified.

3. Scan the course descriptions in the catalog and the number of credit hours assigned for courses in different departments at the institution.
   - At semester-based institutions courses will be typically be from two to four credit hours (or approximately five quarter hours) and extend approximately 14-16 weeks (or approximately 10 weeks for a quarter). The description in the catalog should indicate a course that is appropriately rigorous and has collegiate expectations for objectives and workload. Identify courses/disciplines that seem to depart markedly from these expectations.
   - Institutions may have courses that are in compressed format, self-paced, or otherwise alternatively structured. Credit assignments should be reasonable. (For example, as a full-time load for a traditional semester is typically 15 credits, it might be expected that the norm for a full-time load in a five-week term is 5 credits; therefore, a single five-week course awarding 10 credits would be subject to inquiry and justification.)
   - Teams should be sure to scan across disciplines, delivery mode, and types of academic activities.
   - Federal regulations allow for an institution to have two credit-hour awards: one award for Title IV purposes and following the above federal definition and one for the purpose of defining progression in and completion of an academic program at that institution. Commission procedure also permits this approach.

4. Scan course schedules to determine how frequently courses meet each week and what other scheduled activities are required for each course. Pay particular attention to alternatively-structured or other courses with particularly high credit hours for a course completed in a short period of time or with less frequently scheduled interaction between student and instructor.
5. **Sampling.** Teams will need to sample some number of degree programs based on the headcount at the institution and the range of programs it offers.

- At a minimum, teams should anticipate sampling at least a few programs at each degree level.
- For institutions with several different academic calendars or terms or with a wide range of academic programs, the team should expand the sample size appropriately to ensure that it is paying careful attention to alternative format and compressed and accelerated courses.
- Where the institution offers the same course in more than one format, the team is advised to sample across the various formats to test for consistency.
- For the programs the team sampled, the team should review syllabi and intended learning outcomes for several of the courses in the program, identify the contact hours for each course, and expectations for homework or work outside of instructional time.
- The team should pay particular attention to alternatively-structured and other courses that have high credit hours and less frequently scheduled interaction between the students and the instructor.
- Provide information on the samples in the appropriate space on the worksheet.

6. Consider the following questions:

- Does the institution’s policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution?
- Does that policy address the amount of instructional or contact time assigned and homework typically expected of a student with regard to credit hours earned?
- For institutions with courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy also equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe allotted for the course?
- Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)
- If so, is the institution’s assignment of credit to courses reflective of its policy on the award of credit?

7. If the answers to the above questions lead the team to conclude that there may be a problem with the credit hours awarded the team should recommend the following:

- If the problem involves a poor or insufficiently-detailed institutional policy, the team should call for a revised policy as soon as possible by requiring a monitoring report within no more than one year that demonstrates the institution has a revised policy and evidence of implementation.
- If the team identifies an application problem and that problem is isolated to a few courses or single department or division or learning format, the team should call for follow-up activities (monitoring report or focused evaluation) to ensure that the problems are corrected within no more than one year.
- If the team identifies systematic non-compliance across the institution with regard to the award of credit, the team should notify Commission staff immediately and work with staff to design appropriate follow-up activities. The Commission shall understand systematic noncompliance to mean that the institution lacks any policies to determine the award of academic credit or that there is an inappropriate award of institutional credit not in conformity with the policies established by the institution or with commonly accepted
practices in higher education across multiple programs or divisions or affecting significant numbers of students.

Worksheet on Assignment of Credit Hours

A. Identify the Sample Courses and Programs Reviewed by the Team

Undergraduate
Arts and Sciences
Biology major and courses 101, 106, 207, and 354
Economics major and courses 251, 252, and 370
History major and courses 119, 298, and 324
Political Science major and courses 275, 305 and 311
Theology major and courses 101, 220, 352 and 421
Education
Elementary Education major and courses 210, 212, 330 and 350
Middle/Secondary Education major and courses 372 and 373
Engineering
Electrical major and courses 230, 320 and 345
Mechanical major and courses 220, 361 and 383
Business Administration
Accounting concentration and courses 210, 311, 314, and 317
Marketing concentration and courses 300 and 340
Social Work
Major and courses 355 and 391
Graduate
Engineering masters and courses 502, 507, 552, and 551
Art History masters and courses 500, 510, and 530
Master of Business Administration and courses ACCT601, GBEC600 and FINC600
Doctorate in Professional Psychology and courses 608, 650 and 680
Online Classes
MGMT 6000 Management and Organizational Behavior
EDLD 801 Leadership and Organizational Theory

B. Answer the Following Questions

1) Institutional Policies on Credit Hours

Does the institution’s policy for awarding credit address all the delivery formats employed by the institution? (Note that for this question and the questions that follow an institution may have a single comprehensive policy or multiple policies.)

__x__ Yes

____ No

Comments:

Does that policy relate the amount of instructional or contact time provided and homework typically expected of a student to the credit hours awarded for the classes offered in the delivery formats offered by the institution? (Note that an institution’s policy must go beyond simply stating that it awards credit solely based on assessment of student learning and should also reference instructional time.)

__x__ Yes

____ No
Comments:

For institutions with non-traditional courses in alternative formats or with less instructional and homework time than would be typically expected, does that policy equate credit hours with intended learning outcomes and student achievement that could be reasonably achieved by a student in the timeframe and utilizing the activities allotted for the course?

__x__ Yes  ____ No

Comments:

Is the policy reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

__x__ Yes  ____ No

Comments:

2) Application of Policies

Are the course descriptions and syllabi in the sample academic programs reviewed by the team appropriate and reflective of the institution’s policy on the award of credit? (Note that the Commission will expect that credit hour policies at public institutions that meet state regulatory requirements or are dictated by the state will likely meet federal definitions as well.)

__x__ Yes  ____ No

Comments:

Are the learning outcomes in the sample reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution’s policy on the award of credit?

__x__ Yes  ____ No

Comments:

If the institution offers any alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, were the course descriptions and syllabi for those courses appropriate and reflective of the institution’s policy on the award of academic credit?

__x__ Yes  ____ No

Comments:

If the institution offers alternative delivery or compressed format courses or programs, are the learning outcomes reviewed by the team appropriate to the courses and programs reviewed and in keeping with the institution’s policy on the award of credit? Are the learning outcomes reasonably capable of being fulfilled by students in the time allocated to justify the allocation of credit?

__x__ Yes  ____ No

Comments:
Is the institution’s actual assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution reflective of its policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

___x___ Yes            ___ No

Comments:

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Review the responses provided in this section. If the team has responded “no” to any of the questions above, the team will need to assign Commission follow-up to assure that the institution comes into compliance with expectations regarding the assignment of credit hours.

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution’s credit hour policies and practices?

     ___ Yes            ___x_ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:

D. Identify and Explain Any Findings of Systematic Non-Compliance in One or More Educational Programs with Commission Policies Regarding the Credit Hour

None
Part 3: Clock Hours

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs in clock hours?

_____ Yes  _____ No

Does the institution offer any degree or certificate programs that must be reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs?

_____ Yes  _____ No

If the answer to either question is “Yes,” complete this part of the form.

Instructions

This worksheet is not intended for teams to evaluate whether an institution has assigned credit hours relative to contact hours in accordance with the Carnegie definition of the credit hour. This worksheet solely addresses those programs reported to the Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes.

Complete this worksheet only if the institution offers any degree or certificate programs in clock hours OR that must be reported to the U.S. Department of Education in clock hours for Title IV purposes even though students may earn credit hours for graduation from these programs. Non-degree programs subject to clock hour requirements (an institution is required to measure student progress in clock hours for federal or state purposes or for graduates to apply for licensure) are not subject to the credit hour definitions per se but will need to provide conversions to semester or quarter hours for Title IV purposes. Clock-hour programs might include teacher education, nursing, or other programs in licensed fields.

For these programs Federal regulations require that they follow the federal formula listed below. If there are no deficiencies identified by the accrediting agency in the institution’s overall policy for awarding semester or quarter credit, accrediting agency may provide permission for the institution to provide less instruction provided that the student’s work outside class in addition to direct instruction meets the applicable quantitative clock hour requirements noted below.

Federal Formula for Minimum Number of Clock Hours of Instruction (34 CFR §668.8)

1 semester or trimester hour must include at least 37.5 clock hours of instruction
1 quarter hour must include at least 25 clock hours of instruction

Note that the institution may have a lower rate if the institution’s requirement for student work outside of class combined with the actual clock hours of instruction equals the above formula provided that a semester/trimester hour includes at least 30 clock hours of actual instruction and a quarter hour include at least 20 semester hours.

Worksheet on Clock Hours

A. Answer the Following Questions

Does the institution’s credit to clock hour formula match the federal formula?

_____ Yes  _____ No

Comments:
If the credit to clock hour conversion numbers are less than the federal formula, indicate what specific requirements there are, if any, for student work outside of class?

Did the team determine that the institution’s credit hour policies are reasonable within the federal definition as well as within the range of good practice in higher education? (Note that if the team answers “No” to this question, it should recommend follow-up monitoring in section C below.)

____ Yes  ______ No

Comments:

Did the team determine in reviewing the assignment of credit to courses and programs across the institution that it was reflective of the institution’s policy on the award of credit and reasonable and appropriate within commonly accepted practice in higher education?

____ Yes  ______ No

Comments:

B. Does the team approve variations, if any, from the federal formula in the institution’s credit to clock hour conversion?

____ Yes  ______ No

(Note that the team may approve a lower conversion rate than the federal rate as noted above provided the team found no issues with the institution’s policies or practices related to the credit hour and there is sufficient student work outside of class as noted in the instructions.)

C. Recommend Commission Follow-up, If Appropriate

Is any Commission follow-up required related to the institution’s clock hour policies and practices?

____ Yes  ______ No

Rationale:

Identify the type of Commission monitoring required and the due date:
### Nature of Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTROL:</th>
<th>Private NFP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEAM RECOMMENDATION:</td>
<td>nc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREES AWARDED:</td>
<td>Certificate, Bachelors, Masters, Specialist, Doctors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM RECOMMENDATION:</td>
<td>nc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conditions of Affiliation

**STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS:**
Accreditation at the Doctor's level is limited to the Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership, the Doctorate of Education in Organizational Development, the Doctorate of Psychology in Counseling Psychology, and the Juris Doctor. International offering is limited to the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction (M.A.C.I.).

| TEAM RECOMMENDATION: | nc |

### APPROVAL OF NEW ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS:
The Commission’s Notification Program is available for new locations within the United States.

| TEAM RECOMMENDATION: | nc |
APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION DEGREES:
The institution has been approved under Commission policy to offer up to 5% of its total degree programs through distance education. The processes for expanding distance education are defined in other Commission documents.

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: nc

ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES:


Summary of Commission Review

YEAR OF LAST REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION: 2003 - 2004

YEAR FOR NEXT REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION: 2013 - 2014

TEAM RECOMMENDATION: 2023-24
ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE WORKSHEET

INSTITUTION and STATE: 1385 University of St. Thomas  MN

TYPE OF REVIEW:  PEAQ: Comprehensive Evaluation

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW:
☑️ No change to Organization Profile

Educational Programs
Programs leading to Undergraduate  Program Distribution
Associates  0
Bachelors  108

Programs leading to Graduate
Masters  51
Specialist  2
Doctors  8

Certificate programs  Certificate  41

Recommended Change:

Off-Campus Activities:
In State - Present Activity
Campuses:  None.

Additional Locations:
Diamondhead Education Center - Burnsville, MN
Pioneer Ridge Ctr, Chaska - Chaska, MN
Edina Community Center - Edina, MN
Farmington High School - Farmington, MN
Lakeville South High School - Lakeville, MN
Maple Grove Senoir High - Maple Grove, MN
Osseo Educational Services Center (ESC) - Maple Grove, MN
American Indian Opportunities Industrialization Center (AIOIC) - Minneapolis, MN
UST Minneapolis campus - Minneapolis, MN
Osseo Senior High - Osseo, MN
UST Gainey Center, Owatonna - Owatonna, MN
Intermediate District 287 - Plymouth, MN
Academy of Holy Angels - Richfield, MN
Fairview Community Center, Roseville - Roseville, MN
Benilde-St. Margaret's School - Saint Louis Park, MN
Snail Lake Educ Ctr, Shoreview - Shoreview, MN
St Marks School - St Paul, MN
St Pascal Baylon Church - St Paul, MN
Cretin-Derham Hall - St. Paul, MN
MN Police Officers, St. Paul - St. Paul, MN
East Ridge High School - Woodbury, MN

**Recommended Change:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Out Of State - Present Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campuses: None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Locations:**
University of Sioux Falls-Cleveland Bldg - Sioux Falls, SD

**Recommended Change:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Out of USA - Present Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campuses: None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Locations:** None.

**Recommended Change:**

**Distance Education Programs:**
Present Offerings:
Master 52.0299 Business Administration, Management and Operations, Other Healthcare MBA Internet
Certificate 13.1315 Reading Teacher Education Reading, Elementary Internet
Certificate 13.1004 Education/Teaching of the Gifted and Talented Graduate Certificate in Gifted, Create and Talented Internet

**Recommended Change:**

**Correspondence Education Programs:**
Present Offerings:
None.

Recommended Change:

**Contractual Relationships:**
**Present Offerings:**
Master 13.0499 Educational Administration and Supervision, Other - 13.0499 Educational Administration and Supervision, Other (Public Safety and Law Enforcement Leadership)

Recommended Change:

**Consortial Relationships:**
**Present Offerings:**
Master 44.0701 Social Work Master - 44.0701 Social Work (Master of Social Work)

Recommended Change: