Additional Comments / Recommendations from the WASC Team Report
(Direct Quotes with bold added)

Challenge & Engagement:

- The broad definition of the terms has not yet generated a focused and cohesive strategy of plan to enhance challenge and engagement.
- There remains no strategy institutionally or programmatically about how to enhance challenge and engagement, nor any consistent agreement as to what this actually is or how it can best be measured.
- The next step for the institution is to capture the outcome of this ongoing discussion and debate—including determining consensus about the definition of the concepts and fully assessing and analyzing results—in order to build upon initial successes and inform future strategy.
- It is not clear from the material or discussions as to how these statistics (from NSSE) fit with institutional or departmental goals of engagement and challenge. Greater focus could prove beneficial in prioritizing resources and energies.
- The remaining “strategies” articulated by CLU for achieving enhanced challenge and engagement are less developed and have not yet resulted in articulated objectives, tactics and clearly connected measurables.
- As the discussion of challenge and engagement continues, it will be helpful for faculty to engage in a more reflective discussion of the programmatic implications and expectations of these two goals.
- The team was not able to find a shared vision as to the objectives behind these two strategies (service learning and study abroad). It would be helpful to specify the particular types of service learning and study abroad activities that effectively challenge and engage students, as well as determine levels of student and faculty participation needed to meet the engagement and challenge outcomes.
- The team encourages CLU to consider moving beyond individual efforts and articulate at an institutional or programmatic level what it wishes to achieve in intensifying its focus on student research. It would be helpful for CLU to address such issues as: indicators of “success,” a clear definition of “research” within the context of CLU, the level of expectation for student participation, and methods for measuring progress.

Diversity:

- This network of student recruitment activities merits sustained analysis and reflection to determine which programs are achieving desired results and to coordinate efforts to maximize synergy.
- Successful endeavors such as MCO could be shared broadly throughout the University, both to publicize successes for the sake of sustaining diversity efforts and to inform relevant stakeholders who can learn from such success.
- The FOCUS [mentoring] program… has reported successful results for participants, supporting documentation presented to the team included no explanatory analysis, making it difficult to understand the impact of the program.
- The team notes a possible tension between CLU’s desire to enlarge its undergraduate population while continuing to increase the diversity of its community.
- CLU may want to review the newly modified HR policy in order to address diversity earlier in the hiring process.
- Lack of diversity in senior administration and its impact on institutional climate.
- The suite of strategies aimed at diversifying CLU’s faculty, staff, administration and board is less well-developed than that directed at students. While some of these recruitment and retention initiatives are being assessed on a regular basis, the results of others remain unexamined. Systematic assessment can help to streamline efforts and reallocate resources to those initiatives producing the best results. As well, all of these efforts will profit from tighter coordination between them.
Diversification of the faculty pool has targeted recruitment to this point, and attention now needs to be expanded to **address successful retention of a more diverse faculty**. In campus discussions, current faculty from underrepresented groups point to several challenges of working at a predominantly white institution: subtle stereotyping by students and colleagues (e.g., not expecting them to speak fluent or understandable English); having no clear faculty ombudsman or other point person for addressing discrimination; absence of follow-through after being recruited; being burdened with expectations to solve or teach about discrimination just because they have experience with discrimination (as opposed to bringing in experts in this content area); and institutional and cultural constraints that limit diversity prospects (e.g., location, church-affiliation).

**CLU designed a robust series of events to address this objective [diversity] and now needs to conduct a more systematic analysis of its achievement.** Where the team found evidence in support of this objective, it did not find corresponding analysis.

The visiting team encourages the University to engage in **tighter alignment between activities and intended outcomes**. The alignment issue is illustrated in the overall framing of this objective: it contains two distinct claims—strengthening understanding and appreciation of diversity, and strengthening global awareness in the campus environment and community—yet the self-study does not distinguish between the two either in its description of activities or in its brief description of results.

**No analysis is offered to connect the NSSE data** to the output activities or to address how these data demonstrate achievement of the five cultural competency learning outcomes. Additionally, the data are not disaggregated to determine if all demographic subsets share the same perceptions.

**Many of the additional activities undertaken (beyond the CDI activities) to achieve the three objectives in this theme have not yet benefited from a formalized assessment structure.** Systematic processes still need to be developed to ensure identification of appropriate evidence and ongoing collection, reflection and use of results need for more intentional collection of evidence of the impact of activities, as well as analysis and communication of results.

**Broad dissemination of such a report (perhaps an abridged version) throughout the University can be used to promote a common conceptual framework for diversity initiatives and broader understanding of the relationships between the various activities taking place across the campus.** **Widespread sharing of results, especially successes, is essential to sustaining the diversity initiatives.**

As the CDI evaluators note, “**leadership at all levels of the institution is important to sustain a diversity initiative.**”

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- The entire framework of educational objectives… appears in the general catalog and on the assessment website, but **not on the websites for academic programs**, where it might be more helpful to students.
- It was difficult for the team to ascertain from the self-study itself the **extent to which individual units and programs have developed program-based SLOs.**
- The **status of SLOs at the department level varies widely** within the College of Arts and Sciences, with some departments having well articulated field-specific SLOs and others linking more vaguely to the institutional SLOs.
- Most departments have incorporated the institutional SLOs into their own assessment efforts, but these **efforts vary widely in their sophistication.** Some, but not all, programs and units have established their own field-specific learning outcomes.
- **CLU would benefit from developing an assessment plan at the university level that describes both how and when each institutional SLO will be assessed**—something it now requires of departments as part of the program review process. It is important for the University to have such a plan in place, since direct assessment of all 14 SLOs will need to be carefully implemented, shepherded, and monitored over a number of years.
- **While doing a good job of identifying institutional SLOs, CLU has not yet set specific levels of attainment** or gathered data to determine what the level of attainment is for each outcome.
Strategic Plan:

- It is critical that the institution define its vision with a clarity that will enable institutional leadership to assess results on an ongoing basis and to guide decisions and energies in a more focused framework.
- There is a need for more effective integration of the University’s planning for enrollment and retention, academic excellence, recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and staff, facilities and technology, and budgeting and fundraising.
- Especially important will be the leadership of the provost in creating an academic plan with a clear statement of academic priorities to drive the rest of the University’s planning.
- The next major challenges still revolve around institutionalizing diversity initiatives after the remaining grant monies are expended this year. This includes integrating diversity more thoroughly into the institutional core identity and operations, including through strategic planning and budgeting…this will likely require a central coordinator, such as a chief diversity officer, as well as a clear accountability structure to ensure the myriad strategies and activities are well-coordinated and systematically assessed for effectiveness in advancing the University’s priorities. The team also recommends that the University integrate its diversity goals with its aspirations for excellence, including the development of clear indicators of achievement that incorporate diversity priorities.
- As part of the academic plan, program reviews should be linked formally to institutional planning and the budget process.
- Systematic methods of incorporating more empirical evidence into strengthening the planning process are needed.
- The University’s short and long-term goals require an expansion of economic and other resources.
- The team recommends a tighter focus within current assessment structures—from the program up to institution-wide levels—on systematic review, analysis, and communication of results in order to make assessment and evaluation results available for use in University planning and budgeting processes.

Lack of Direct Evidence:

- The self-study is unclear on the overall status of direct assessment of student learning outcomes. The report does not provide much information about the results, the reflection process, or resulting improvements.
- There still appears to be some confusion between the assessment of actual student learning and the description of organizational structures and processes.
- Another area of apparent confusion noted in the previous visiting team report is the difference between direct assessment of student learning and indirect measures such as surveys and focus group comments. While CLU has put excellent structures and processes in place, it needs to move beyond descriptions and indirect measures to more direct measures at both the institutional and the unit level.
- The team did not see during its visit any use of direct evidence by CLU in its assessment of the Honors Program.
- While it discusses a fourth institutional SLO, field-specific knowledge and experience, the self-study report lacks evidence based on direct assessment of student work products. While the evidence provided is impressive, it is not based on direct assessment of student learning.
- The team encourages CLU to incorporate more direct evidence and analysis of diversity-related student learning to assess achievement of this objective.
- A sampling of self-study reports, however, revealed only NSSE data populated by IR and no accompanying analysis of the relation to diversity learning outcomes, so programs were not yet taking advantage of the opportunity for direct assessment of diversity learning.
The team commends CLU for developing multiple curricular and co-curricular strategies to expand and deepen the treatment of domestic and global diversity (programmatic output). Attention now needs to be directed to collecting appropriate evidence and analyzing the evidence to determine programmatic effectiveness. Assessment practices also need to include more direct evidence of student work to evaluate achievement of intended learning outcomes.

The process could be improved by including in the Program Review Template a section requiring programs to report on actual assessment results.

Evaluations of student learning would be enriched by a greater focus on direct measures of learning outcomes rather than indirect measures.

**CORE 21:**

- A very large number of courses meet the CORE 21 requirements… This curricular proliferation places an emphasis on departmental representation rather than core learning outcomes.
- Only some of the CORE 21 requirements (notably the writing intensive courses) are aligned directly with the institution-wide SLOs, a disjunction that is less than ideal. The lack of fuller alignment poses a potential for curricular incoherence, student confusion over what their learning goals should be, and additional burdens on faculty to undertake more assessment projects than necessary.
- CORE 21 has been in place for two decades, an unusually long period of time during which higher education and the world have undergone profound changes. CLU acknowledges in its self-study that the core curriculum needs review and revision… This should be a priority before the next accreditation cycle begins.
- As the key curricular program for realizing the institutional SLOs, the core curriculum should be based directly and clearly on these learning objectives.
- Learning outcomes are well established and disseminated at the institutional level, but are not yet well integrated into general education requirements.

**Faculty Development:**

- The team recommends that CLU design an explicit faculty development plan that: identifies clear outcomes for its overall faculty development strategy; explicitly aligns its faculty development plan with achievement of the institutional goals and student learning objectives; articulates clear expectations for faculty participation; and develops a clear assessment methodology and plan for measuring the impact of the faculty development efforts on CLU’s goal to achieve excellence in teaching and learning that encompasses challenge, engagement, and diversity.
- The team also recommends tighter coordination between efforts to enhance challenge and engagement, academic assessment processes, and the Center for Teaching and Learning (focused on using technology to enhance the classroom experience) in order to maximize synergy among all university efforts dedicated to improving teaching and learning.
- Aligning pedagogy with SLOs is a more complicated matter…There may be good opportunities for the Center for Teaching and Learning to collaborate with the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness to design faculty development workshops aimed at helping faculty respond creatively to SLOs through different approaches to pedagogy. Deans and department chairs could also remove some apprehension about teaching innovation by assuring faculty that such creativity will be encouraged and not be punished.