

ABOUT THE DOCUMENT

TYPE OF REPORT/PROPOSAL

Reaffirmation
 institutional proposal
 CPR
 EER

Candidacy/Initial Accreditation
 CPR
 EER

ACADEMIC YEAR SUBMITTED TO WASC 2006

ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

INSTITUTIONAL TYPE

public
 private—independent
 private—religious affiliation, seminary

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

500 or fewer
 501-5000
 5001-15,000
 more than 15,000

HIGHEST DEGREE LEVEL OFFERED

Baccalaureate
 Masters
 Doctorate

DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON AND CONTACT INFORMATION

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Capacity and Preparatory Review Report

Prepared for the Western Association of Schools and Colleges by

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I. Introduction

Who We Are

The president tells new students that by accepting Woodbury's challenge to transform their lives, the students will be able to transform the lives of their communities. This message is Woodbury's most enduring story.

The story of Woodbury begins with the students that the university serves. To understand the university, one must understand its students. Those students are overwhelmingly the first in their families to go to college. They come overwhelmingly from low-income families. And in the undergraduate programs, they represent overwhelmingly minority groups. Since 1996, the federal government has designated Woodbury University as a Hispanic Serving Institution. Our IPEDS report indicates that roughly 35% of our students are Hispanic, 11% are Asian, and 6% are African American. About 40% are non-Hispanic Caucasian ([Demographic Report](#)). Although it is not reported, we know that about 40% of that non-Hispanic Caucasian population is Armenian, with other significant minorities coming from Middle Eastern areas, such as Iran. These numbers have remained more or less constant over the past ten years.

For the most part, we educate students who typically do not persist because their economic situation does not provide an onramp to the world of the educated, because their educational attainment in high school does not provide a stable foundation on which to build, and because their socio-cultural fit with the culture of higher education makes successful adaptation difficult. And yet of a cohort of 50 schools in which the Educational Trust places Woodbury University, we rank at or [near the top in minority graduation and persistence](#).

The focus of Woodbury University's attention is the success of its students, whose impact on the future of others is powerful when measured by the contributions they will make to the aspirations and attainment of their families, to the skill and knowledge in their immediate communities, and to the improvement of society as a whole.

The express purpose of developing capacity for Woodbury University has been to advance the quality of education for these students. It was the focus of the [strategic plan](#) that the community put together in 2003-4 and it has remained the focus in all our talks and deliberations. Our journey is not a journey to achieve or maintain accreditation. Our journey is to enrich the lives of those in our community and to be able to sustain that journey through the continuous improvement of outcomes, processes and resources.

Where We Came From

In the late 19th century, when Los Angeles was a rapidly growing city of 11,000, community leaders looked forward to expansion driven by a new real estate boom. In 1884, responding to the needs of the city's growing business community, F.C. Woodbury, an educator and entrepreneur from San Francisco, where he had been a partner in Heald's Business College, arrived and founded Woodbury Business College. In the historic storefront on North Main Street in the center of the local business community, Woodbury forged a link with the economic infrastructure of Southern California. Mr. Woodbury helped found the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and fashioned his college to supply labor for the burgeoning business community. The college drew men and women from all social classes to acquire the practical business skills of bookkeeping, commercial law, and telegraphy.

By World War I, Woodbury College had established a solid reputation for individual instruction, for education of those often excluded or marginalized in education (nearly one third of its students were women, and Hispanic and Asian minorities were also present, although in small numbers), and for education that developed professional citizens in areas that were aligned to the emerging needs of the city.

In 1926, Woodbury was chartered by the State of California as a Collegiate Educational Institution of higher learning to confer both graduate and undergraduate degrees. In 1931, the college became a school of business and design when it established a Division of Professional Arts that focused on three fields closely allied to the emerging entertainment sector: interior design, fashion design, and graphic design. Again, Woodbury's growth adhered to the principle of building the capacity of the region and expanding opportunities for people from diverse parts of the social spectrum.

In 1937, legendary President R.H. "Pop" Whitten built new facilities at 1027 Wilshire Boulevard. After World War II and the Korean Conflict, the rolls of the college overflowed with students on the GI bill, many of whom would never have gone to college except for the bill and for Woodbury. Woodbury had developed an innovative approach that allowed students to go to school year round and finish a four-year degree in two years while working. Complete curricula were offered in the morning and in the evening, leaving half the day free for work. Professionals from the various fields taught, and those instructors served as mentors to the students. The use of successful, practicing professionals to teach, which began in that era, has remained a hallmark of Woodbury's educational process. For 50 years the Wilshire Boulevard location served as the classroom and administrative building for Woodbury.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredited Woodbury in 1961. In 1969, the school changed its charter with the addition of a graduate program leading to a Master of Business Administration (MBA). In 1972, Woodbury College became a non-profit institution of higher learning. In 1974, Woodbury College became Woodbury University. Computer Information Systems was added as a major in 1982. In 1984, the university added a major in architecture.

In 1985, after 101 years in central downtown Los Angeles, Woodbury acquired a 22.4 acre campus, the former home of one of the nation's oldest convent schools and the interim campus for the California Art Institute. New classrooms and administration buildings were added in 1986, and in 1987 the university moved in. The campus, located at the southern end of the San Fernando Valley, straddles the borders of Burbank, home to much of the LA entertainment industry, and Los Angeles itself, an international center for design, apparel, architecture, and international business.

In 1987, the Weekend College program for working adults was established with the aid of grants from the Fletcher Jones Foundation and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. The North Hall residence hall was completed in 1990. In 1991, the [Council for Interior Design Accreditation](#) (formerly known as FIDER) accredited the Interior Architecture program. In 1994, the architecture program received its initial [NAAB](#) accreditation. That same year, the university formally organized its undergraduate and graduate programs into three schools: the School of Architecture and Design, which included departments of Architecture, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, and Interior Design; the School of Business and Management, which had departments of Accounting, Business and Management, Computer Information Systems, and Marketing; and the School of Arts and Sciences, which had departments of Humanities and of Natural and Social Sciences and provided all university departments a full range of general education courses. That same year, three new Arts and Sciences majors were added: psychology and management, politics and history, and liberal arts and business. New architecture studios were completed in 1996. In spring 1998, the School of Business received its accreditation from the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

In 1998, in a joint effort with Mesa Community College, Woodbury opened a facility at the Point Loma Naval Training Center in San Diego to expand access to an accredited architecture

program to students in that border region, and in 2001 moved to a larger facility in the city's downtown business district.

In 2001, Woodbury University received a \$2.2 million Title V grant to fund a complete renovation of the institution's management information system and technological infrastructure, improvement in the teaching of basic skills and foundation courses, development of technology-aided pedagogy, and improvement in student academic support and advising. Also in 2001, the Board of Trustees approved a 10-year Master Plan for the Burbank campus. As part of that plan, the old basketball gymnasium was converted into the new Design Center. The New Woody's Cafe / auditorium with a capacity of 300 was completed in 2002.

In 2002, the university approved the Weekend College to offer a cohort-based graduate program and undergraduate completion program in organizational leadership in partnership with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Open to all county employees, the undergraduate degree is delivered at the educational center of the county sheriff's department in Monterey Park. The Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources recognizes the degrees as applicable for promotion. The success of the program, along with Sheriff Lee Baca's express desire that every deputy have a college degree, has led to an innovative link of the program to the sheriff department's Deputy Leadership Institute. Other municipal areas in the Los Angeles region have begun to use the programs, and now members of the private sector are joining. The vision of a highly educated county and municipal workforce that can help sustain growth is a model of development supported by ideas of economist and urban theorist Richard Florida.

In 2003, the administration approved a new faculty governance system that uses a Senate model of representation and that grants more power to the faculty to regulate areas central to the role of the faculty. The Chief Academic Officer no longer presides over faculty functions as the dean of the faculty, but the faculty monitors key areas of personnel and curriculum. The president of the Faculty Association, serving in the capacity as representative of the faculty's authority, was granted the title Dean of the Faculty. Elected for a two-year term, the Dean of the Faculty collaborates with the Chief Academic Officer on all important issues of procedure and policy, represents the faculty at Board of Trustees meetings, and is a non-voting member of the Board's Academic and Student Affairs committee.

In 2005, the university approved a 12-month post-professional master's degree in Real Estate Development for architects at its facility in San Diego. In spring 2006, AACSB authorized the School of Business to submit an accreditation plan and provided the school a mentor. In fall 2007, Animation, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, and Interior Architecture had their initial accreditation visit by NASAD.

Because of burgeoning enrollments, temporary and long-term plans for expanding space were considered by the campus and approved by the president and Board of Trustees. Kirby Hall, a new sprung structure studio building, was completed adjacent to North Hall in the summer of 2005. The rest of the current build-out of the campus, which includes new business and architecture buildings, will be discussed in succeeding essays.

What WASC Said and What We Promised

As noted in our *Institutional Proposal*: while "Woodbury's strength flows from its underlying historical purpose and the principles that have persisted," many of the obstacles that Woodbury encountered after its conversion to a non-profit in 1972 came from the need to create and institutionalize practices and processes that were irrelevant as a for-profit.

A March 1998 team visit for reaffirmation of accreditation produced a report that resulted in a special visit in January 2001. The concerns that triggered the visit were in five areas: financial viability, assessment, planning, faculty, and technology. These areas centered on the sustainability of an emerging institution that had changed its course dramatically and that was finding its path to

maturity. In its 2001 report to WASC, the university outlined the following strategies for success: 1) rely on core values; 2) pursue academic rigor; 3) operate strategically; 4) strengthen identity; 5) grow enrollments; and 6) strengthen the endowment and development.

In the relatively short time between that special visit and this current report, change has been rapid and dramatic. The endowment, for instance, approaches \$14 million, with gifts for the year totaling \$3.1 million, the approximate equivalent of the entire endowment in 2001. Woodbury today has proven that it can sustain itself, that it can produce quality, and that it can lead and innovate. Woodbury shows a passion for learning and improvement for the sake of its students and its stakeholders.

In our *Institutional Proposal* we stated that we needed to be certain that we maintained and improved our capacity to support growth. In order to maintain that capacity, we asserted the need to focus resources on our core mission and develop mechanisms that would assure we met our core mission effectively and with efficient use of our resources. To that end, we promised WASC and the campus community that we would set four very tangible goals as standards for the Capacity and Preparatory Review: (1) A renewed mission and vision for the future that is embraced by the community; (2) performance objectives for each unit of the university; (3) greater capacity to collect, interpret, and communicate data; and (4) mechanisms for ongoing analysis of the ability of our core resources to sustain planned growth. As this report will show, we have defined ourselves, aligned ourselves, created infrastructures to gather data to inform decision-making, and have used that data in making decisions. However, the accomplishment of those four goals simply prepares for what we hope will be a journey toward ever-increasing quality that we can demonstrate to multiple audiences.

In the narrative that follows, we weave together two different promises made in our *Institutional Proposal*. We promised to stage the Capacity and Preparatory Review based on the four standards and also based on the themes that form the backbone of our efforts, which are (1) Institutional Identity; (2) Institutional Alignment; (3) Student Success; and (4) Instructional Effectiveness. While in some areas we have yet to fully mature, in most the community feels that we have become developed and even highly developed. We welcome the writing of this report and the visit that follows as a way to measure our progress and chart the path for further progress.

Where We Are Going

In 2004, the Board of Trustees challenged the senior management of the institution to help them understand where investment in the university would serve best. The endowment was nearly \$8 million and the value of the property and the debt service on the current loan were at levels that an investment of \$5 million of capital might be possible. The president and his cabinet decided not to answer the question directly, however, but to use the occasion to articulate a philosophy of transformation. In the view of the president and his staff, Woodbury had untapped potential. It was already doing more than widely recognized to create a community of professionals and scholars who were deeply engaged in a highly experiential and innovative educational process. When the president and his staff used the term transformation, they meant that the university needed to realize its potential.

Woodbury University is proud to be part of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, because in its accrediting process WASC recognizes the interests of colleges and universities and helps focus the efforts of colleges and universities to advance in their missions. As we labor to fulfill the promises we made to WASC, we believe we are fulfilling the promises we made to ourselves and the community—promises to act deliberately to improve the lives of all in our community, promises that depends on building and sustaining quality and the resources and processes that make quality possible and assure it. We hope the reader finds that our story, contained in these essays, presents a true picture, one that shows clearly both the destination we envision and our promise of arrival.

II. Woodbury Claims Its Purpose (Standard One)

On October 11, 2005, a month before the university's conversation with WASC about its *Institutional Proposal*, over 100 members of the Woodbury community filled Woody's, the Burbank campus dining hall. They gathered to spend a day contemplating Woodbury's identity. Gensler, an international design and planning firm, led the group through a series of exercises designed with the help of key members of the faculty and administration. During the morning and afternoon sessions, members scanned the environment, internally and externally, present and future, and discussed their work, their values, and, most important, their aspirations. These were the initial steps in the first two themes of identity and alignment.

[The results](#) were pasted around the hall on newsprint, written over in marker, and tagged with colorful stickers. The WASC Reaccreditation Steering Committee gathered and collated the data from those sheets. On January 17, 2006, the community assembled to discuss the results, refine them, and affirm them. The committee had distilled the working product of the first Identity Retreat into six educational principles that seemed to focus the common goals of those who had assembled: Academic Quality, Innovation and Creativity, Communication, Transdisciplinarity, Social Responsibility, and the Integrated Student. The process is memorialized in Woodbury's [institutional portfolio](#).

While these principles brought the community together with common purpose, they also exposed tensions felt in the community by apparent contradictions in its activities. Did "Academic Quality" stand for quality of input or quality of output? Did we aspire to have faculty with better credentials and research records or did we aspire to have faculty who improved the capabilities of our graduates? Did we aspire to enroll students who were high achievers in high school or did we aspire to enroll students whom we could turn into high achievers? And, if the latter, were we happy simply to add value to the lives of our students by making them higher achievers or did we seek to add even more value to their lives by helping them reach an absolute standard of achievement? If that latter, where were we in achieving this goal and what resources would we require to achieve and/or sustain that goal?

The discussions continue. The community clearly wants to improve our students' lives, but it also wants to make sure that our students get the very best education and meet the very highest standards. The discussions have made it clear that the institution's work and the difference it makes in the world have been a magnet for some of the best and brightest faculty and administrators. In embracing the six principles, the faculty and the members of the Woodbury community articulated for the first time the university's difference and embraced that difference. In leveraging its identity as a resource and in deciding to focus its energy to become the institution that it aspired to be, Woodbury took the next essential steps towards alignment (CFR 1.1 & 1.2).

The six principles and their operant definitions are the following:

Academic Quality

In times of great change, standards can change. The university seeks, as it has always done, to add value to the lives of its students through the educational experiences it provides. At the same time, the course and outcomes of learning must adhere to the highest principles and goals. This provides assurance to the students and to the community that the learning at Woodbury University is not only significant but of significant quality.

Innovation and Creativity

Creativity suggests that one is a maker of knowledge, goods, and concepts, and not just a receiver of them. Innovation suggests that what one makes is new and forward-looking. We try to foster the values of innovation and creativity in all members of our community.

Communication

The diversity of forms in which communication takes place has swelled, as have the people and places that one must communicate with. In addition to the expanding media, the types of communication have expanded and given heightened importance to visual and physical as well as written and oral communication. We strive to produce good communication and excellent communicators across diverse media and audiences.

Transdisciplinarity

Transdisciplinarity professes the interdependence of all knowledge and widens the forms of knowing to include emotional intelligences, intuition, and physical knowing. It recognizes the importance of collaboration among the disciplines to solve complex problems. We believe that the collaboration of people each able to make a unique contribution is important.

Social Responsibility

Social responsibility no longer is merely an option for the educated. At base, social responsibility implies a respect for the planet, a respect for its people and the environment. It asserts that all action has impact on the planet and that understanding that impact and accepting responsibility for one's actions is the moral and ethical condition for the educated global citizen. Civic engagement has come to embrace principles of sustainability as well as social justice. Members of our community will be socially responsible.

The Integrated Student

Because of the principles above, Woodbury University finds it more important than ever to assure that the aspects of a student's personal and professional life are fully integrated. What one will do as a professional is an outgrowth of what one will become as a person. All parts of the university will work on producing this integrated student.

For the WASC Reaccreditation Steering Committee, the administration, and the community generally, the new principles were not a disjunction from the past, but a present instantiation of the underlying ideas of the university. The six principles refined and repositioned those previous ideas. They do not contradict Woodbury's mission statement or the IDEALS statement that had guided the university. For instance, "social responsibility" includes "ethics" and "diversity" from the previous documents but also suggests a proactive concern for the well-being of society as a whole and of others in particular. Social responsibility also embraces civility, the environment, and political engagement (CFR 1.5).

After January 17, 2006, the university sought ways to articulate, diffuse, and institutionalize these differences and these ideals so that they would serve as clear guides and would touch every part of the institution's activities. For the most part, we have been successful, although a review of that success has shown that we need to do a better job in helping our students know and understand our mission and principles (CFR 1.2).

On January 26, 2006, the Dean of the Faculty, the CAO, and the Chair of WRSC presented to the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees the six principles in the context of a [white paper](#). Before presenting the six principles, the paper introduced both the process and the reasoning behind them. Then it posed a question: "How can the university hold to its identity

and control its own destiny, while having the capacity to change quickly enough to meet social, technological, and market changes?”

The answer, it argued, lay in uncovering the essence of what the university does, expressing it in ways that are alive to the changing environment, developing mechanisms for continual examination and renewal of that identity, and producing alignment. The request, made of the Board on behalf of the faculty and staff, was to accept the six principles and to consider modifying the university’s mission statement in order to allow alignment.

The mission statement that then operated was a pretty plain description of what the university did. At the heart of the statement was the claim to educate people for professions, a claim that was unchanged by the principles:

Woodbury University is committed to providing the highest level of professional education in its undergraduate and graduate programs. Our goal is to prepare graduates who are articulate, ethical and innovative life-long learners.

In May 2006, after a broad community process in which faculty, staff, and the Board reviewed various possible versions of a new mission, and after several presentations to the president, his cabinet, and the Board of Trustees, the university adopted a new wording of the mission statement that incorporated the ideas expressed in the principles:

Woodbury University is committed to providing the highest level of professional and liberal arts education. The integrated nature of our educational environment cultivates successful students with a strong and enduring sense of personal and social responsibility. We prepare innovative learners who are adept at communicating and willing to cross the boundaries of knowledge in a rapidly changing and complex world.

The new mission statement, crafted by the community, embodied its work and aspirations. It provided a direction and a goal that would be differentiating and effective.

With the six principles and new mission statement approved, Woodbury began to craft a [Master Academic Plan](#) (MAP) that would produce alignment of the missions and educational objectives of both academic and non-academic units. After aligning the missions and objectives, further planning would outline the resources needed to fulfill the missions. After that, the following would take place: 1) a revision of the 2003-04 Strategic Plan; and 2) a revision of the Campus Master Plan. The strategic allocation of resources would follow the MAP through the revision of those other planning documents.

This process of coordinating the construction of the Master Academic Plan has come under the supervisory authority of the [Educational Planning Committee](#) (EPC), a new standing faculty committee approved by the faculty and administration, comprising representatives from each academic unit and charged with the review of all major curricular changes and all Academic Program Reviews. The EPC’s role is to help assure alignment of academic effort and the fair and effective distribution of resources to achieve the best academic results.

As a first step in constructing the MAP, which began in fall 2006, the units undertook a modified SWOT analysis (Internal Strengths and Weakness and External Opportunities and Threats) and a cross-impact analysis that mapped Strengths and Weaknesses to Opportunities and Threats. The findings were then mapped to the six principles and formed the basis for each unit’s revised mission statement and learning objectives. Work on the MAP, however, has progressed slower than expected because the intense introspection opened all aspects of the university to reinvention (CFR 1.2).

Most institutions inherit an organization that imposes a structure on its discrete units. Those structures try to create a synergistic relationship among the units. When those relationships fail, that is when they drain the effective power of the discrete units, a new organization is required to release that energy and elaborate new relationships and synergies. The campuswide process of alignment called into question every organizational structure. Faculty began to see that the academic structure had in many cases created competition rather than collaboration and compromised the effectiveness of various units.

One unanticipated outcome of the MAP process was a restructuring of almost every academic unit. The School of Architecture and Design, which had comprised Animation, Architecture, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, and Interior Architecture, realized that it contained three competitive academic paths—architecture, design, and media—that had ineffectively divided resources and enforced collaborations. The organization created a distraction for the chairs and faculty who wanted to focus exclusively on the effective education of their students.

The planning process resulted in two new units: a new School of Architecture and a new [School of Media, Culture & Design](#) (MCD). Both are highly innovative and both have experienced new energy. MCD incorporated Fashion Design, Graphic Design, and Interior Architecture as design areas; Animation as the central media area; Communication as a media area and culture area that would intensify the focus on history and theory; and Psychology as a culture area that had strong affiliations with both media and design. This reorganization came in the year that the design and media areas were preparing for an initial accrediting visit from the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). It turned out that the MAP process allowed the programs to reflect and plan in ways that aided both the new formation and the NASAD application. Here is what the group wrote about MCD in the NASAD self-study:

MCD is based on a de-centralized system of self-governance by the council of chairs under the leadership of a director chosen by consent of the chairs. The formulation of school policy generates up from the departments through the director who represents MCD in University affairs. This allows for an open forum of discussion and decision making by consent of the departments rather than directed decisions by a dean. . . . The School of Media, Culture & Design offers a series of challenging degree paths designed to cultivate the particular talents of each student and nurture their growth as innovative professionals. Located in Burbank, California, the school enjoys a close proximity to many of the companies at the heart of the greater Los Angeles media and design worlds. A wide range of internship and career opportunities exist in the surrounding area that relate directly to the academic programs in the school. . . . Students are encouraged to explore our wide range of course offerings in order to expand their personal vision, intelligence, and talent. By bringing together the diverse academic and creative fields of Media, Culture & Design, we seek to create an interdisciplinary learning environment that enhances the goals established by each department and provides innovative, highly-respected degree choices for students. . . . We prepare students to live in the global community as innovative problem-solvers and to work in its wide variety of cultural industries as fully creative, critically aware, and socially responsible individuals. The individual departments maintain autonomy of educational aspirations within a creative connectedness that embraces, informs, and enriches the historic educational mission of Woodbury University.

The alignment with our six educational principles, the articulation of the special merits of the unit and program, and the innovative relationship among the constitutive programs all attest to the power of the planning process. In its exit meeting, the visiting team from NASAD praised as strengths the idea of MCD, its structure, and its governance system (Dynamic Self-Governance, which the School of Architecture has also adopted). By locating responsibility in the units, while also fostering meaningful collaborations that leap across disciplinary boundaries, MCD was, according to the visiting team, unique among art and design schools and something to be emulated.

Similar innovation occurred in the School of Architecture, which was also preparing its self-study in anticipation of a NAAB reaffirmation visit timed to coincide with the WASC CPR visit. In

the [NAAB](#) self-study, the School of Architecture describes how “this new independent structure would allow the architecture programs to follow a critical path that would lead to greater success”:

Following a fall of vigorous debate, the architecture faculty agreed upon a newly reorganized structure for their program and in January 2007 the new School of Architecture at Woodbury University was established. . . . Consistent with the university’s mission, the School of Architecture is committed to the training and education of articulate and innovative design professionals. The curriculum prepares our students to balance the need to work competitively in the marketplace with the equally important concerns of ethical conduct and social responsibility.

The first unit to reorganize using the MAP process, however, was the School of Arts and Sciences, which began its work in the spring of 2006, right after the six principles had been adopted but before the ratification of the new mission. As the various professional programs on campus grew, the school had become more embattled and marginalized as a service unit. Resenting its lack of resources to promote its major programs in Communication, Organizational Leadership, Politics and History, and Psychology, it had tried unsuccessfully to use the importance of liberal arts education as a lever to gain stature. The MAP process led to a new articulation of the unit as the [Institute of Transdisciplinary Studies](#) (ITS). The faculty examined the realities of their current situation, the strengths and opportunities that they had, and the shifting landscape of the liberal arts. The results are described by the director of the institute in a paper he recently presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Integrative Studies:

Freed from focusing on majors (and all the pressures therein involved), we have been able to exercise leadership on campus in a number of areas. We have created a series of faculty discussions on innovations in learning, study abroad approaches, and interdisciplinary teaching (a necessary precursor, we believe, to transdisciplinarity). We have created collaborative relationships across the campus, assisting in the furtherance of our colleagues’ goals while also pursuing our own. We have developed courses in the SENCER (Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities) program. We have begun a unique honors program centered on a fellows program for juniors (complete with \$1000 scholarship) that engages them in a collaboratively constructed transdisciplinary seminar on globalization. Most of all, we have successfully, as my colleagues now tell me, created an Institute where the members feel that they are doing something valuable and unique, where their stature within the institution has been enhanced, and above all else, they have a distinctive purpose and role that is relevant to the entire community.

Finally the process of defining the institution’s identity led to a reinvention of other units, like [Academic Support](#), Student Affairs, and University Advancement. The six principles led the faculty to recognize the importance of personal development to the educational process and the prospect of life-long learning. The kind of distrust, narrow views, and misunderstandings that often created schisms between academic and student development units have begun to disappear through a closer alignment of the curricular and co-curricular.

In each case, reexamination led to new structures that grew out of the original identity work that the institution began in October, 2005, and out of the institution’s efforts to position its programs internally and externally to leverage the most resources. Through collaborations and synergies within and between units and through differentiations that take advantage of the university’s strengths, we have positioned the programs for increased growth of quality, reputation, and resources.

In summary, a more intense focus on our identity, greater access to data about who we are, and an intense planning process have created transition and transformation in the institution. The internal changes have also changed some of our timetables, accelerating some and slowing others. On the whole, however, Woodbury has emerged as a “learning institution,” that looks at itself with great candor, that is agile and adaptive to change, that is not risk averse.

The community, like all communities made uncomfortable by the ambiguities of transition, has emerged hopeful and confident. On its initial accreditation visit, the [NASAD](#) team found the structure of MCD and ITS particularly noteworthy and positive, offering a model of collaborative learning. In particular they noted the lack of silos that separate academic programs and students at different levels within programs. The kind of collaboration within and between the schools comes from the highly cohesive identity and mission that binds us together. This kind of third-party validation for the identity we have claimed keeps the community energized and moving forward with great hope for its future. The new mission statements, goals, and outcomes are proudly proclaimed in the current university catalog (CFR 1.7). We have rediscovered and embraced our identity. These statements are the starting point for planning, for curriculum, for resource allocation. In their printed form they provide a public promise of the intention of each aspect of our programs.

While much work remains for total alignment and for having in place all the systems that will monitor effectiveness in achieving our outcomes and in using our resources, we feel confident that the university has emerged from the process of self-examination stronger and more able to progress in a common direction towards common goals articulated in the new mission statement and in the six principles.

III. Woodbury Acts Everywhere to Achieve its Educational Purpose (Standard Two)

Unless all the members of a community understand what the organization is trying to achieve, they cannot help achieve it. Unless they are aligned to the right purpose, understand how their role contributes to the effort, and have some way to measure their impact, they cannot be effective. A sense of effectiveness confers pride and pleasure that also creates positive and purposeful energy. Unless the community helps its members understand the expectations for effective activity, unless all members are empowered to help, and unless positive action is rewarded, the community and its members will not advance.

There are other benefits of alignment, besides effectiveness, pride, and energy. With alignment, resources developed in one area will often be useful in other areas. The effect in any area where there is alignment may amplify other areas' effectiveness. The concept of synergy (a relationship that, without depriving any activity of essential power, adds value to other activities) is fundamental to well-functioning institutions. Part of Woodbury University's task in the last few years has been first to find purpose and then to make sure that all activities are aligned and able to achieve their purposes. This essay looks at Woodbury's progress in Standard Two, as well as its themes of alignment, effectiveness, and student success.

As noted earlier, fall 2006 found the campus working intensely on the [Master Academic Plan](#). For the MAP, each unit prepared a SWOT and cross-impact analysis. On the basis of that analysis, it revisited its mission statement, unit goals, and, where appropriate, student-learning outcomes. It was then to refine these by aligning them to the new university mission and principles. The results were shared to find synergies. We have already considered how the first phases of reflection on the university's identity led to reconsideration of the identities of various units. The next phase, which is underway, is to define the relationships among the units and the resources each unit needs to achieve its goals in fulfillment of its mission. The community has great hopes for the impact that success of the Master Academic Plan will have on the campus.

Planning, however, and the use of planning to align effort and resources have a longer history than the work on the new Master Academic Plan. The move from downtown to Burbank required planning, as did the addition of successful programs like architecture and organizational leadership, as did getting professional accreditations for business, interior architecture, and architecture, creating the [Campus Master Plan](#), and preparing two successful Title V applications.

Even before the last WASC visit, the university had developed a series of strategic plans that it had followed. However, by 2003 the university had secured the services of a professional planner, the vice president for Information Technology and Planning, who embarked on a strategic planning process that is community-driven and has yearly iterations, a plan that in turn drives decision-making and the allocation of resources.

From 2003 to 2004, the community worked on that [strategic plan](#), which differed from all previous ones by focusing on a single critical goal and aligning all planning to support that goal. That goal was student learning. The process culminated in 2004 when the campus community gathered for a workshop to review and prioritize the items in the final draft of the new plan. Academic quality was made the top priority, and towards that aim, achieving and sustaining the highest level of program accreditation became paramount. We wanted to know what others thought the best product of learning would look like. That would help us understand what resources would be necessary to achieve excellence in academic quality (CFR 2.1). Of equal importance, all the units took their

starting point from their impact on student learning, from enrollment that was to focus on bringing in the right students to advancement that was to build scholarship and endowments to support student learning.

The focus on successful learning clearly grew out of a culture that already strove to be learning-centered rather than teaching-centered. The faculty and staff have been acutely aware of the students they seek to serve, their needs and their backgrounds. Because of the students whom we educate and the difficulty those students encounter at entering and in persisting, we know that a robust series of interventions is necessary (CFR 2.3). As a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution, we were able to apply for and receive a Title V award to improve services to those students in order to increase their chances to persist and succeed. Given that the profile of our Hispanic students resembles that of the majority of our students, the services were rendered institution-wide and the differential impact on the performance of Hispanic students measured. That impact is indeed reflected in the persistence and graduation rates that not only are above the national averages but also are in some cases superior to private schools with significantly greater resources. Title V allowed us to plan, collect data, and improve the effectiveness of services. Whatever we gained through Title V that proved effective, such as our peer mentoring system, we have institutionalized by making programs, positions, and processes permanent and bringing the funding for those into our E & G budget.

As one might expect in a small private university and one with a student body like ours, advising and mentoring permeate and structure the interactions of students, faculty, and staff. When students first matriculate, they are offered an orientation program ([SOAR](#)) where they are introduced to the culture of the university campus, sample a class, and connect with faculty and peer mentors (CFR 2.12). Entering students then take an orientation class called [Personal Development 100](#) (PD 100), which, unlike the kind of show-and-tell orientation courses of the past, is structured around the experience of new students as they adapt to the institution. The course, which has been elaborated by the heads of the student development unit and the [Institute for Excellence in Teaching and Learning](#), helps students develop personal and practical skills like reading a syllabus, approaching faculty for assistance, and speaking up in class. This highly interactive program helps students reflect on their adaptation, test their adaptive skills, get feedback, and strengthen those skills.

PD 100 not only helps students reflect on their new experiences and begin to develop the habits of learning within the campus environment, the course also helps students consider what they bring to the educational environment and experience that will help them succeed. In the past, faculty and staff have reviewed with students the College Student Inventory (CSI) and the Myers-Briggs, in order for students to understand what strengths they have for success, what obstacles will lie in their way, and how they can recognize and overcome the obstacles. For our students, understanding who they are and how they can best approach their learning is crucial for their success (CFR 2.10).

While the professional [advising](#) staff and many of the faculty advisors are excellent, difficulties still exist for fully successful faculty advising and mentoring. All full-time faculty members and all adjuncts who advise receive training. For full-time faculty, advising is also one criterion evaluated for [contract renewal](#) and [promotion](#). Yet no regular assessment of advising or continuous training program for faculty is in place at this time. For some faculty, too, the load of advisees is unusually large and exceeds levels recommended by NACADA and similar organizations. Such loads make mentoring difficult. This is an area that we will need to work on.

The university also pays particular attention to its transfer students, who make up a large minority of its students and most frequently come from the California community colleges. For those entering our traditional undergraduate programs, we provide a specialized [PD](#) orientation course, since these students often require an introduction to the rigors and the expectations of a four-year university experience that in many cases differ sharply from the expectations and rigor in community colleges. Currently IGETC makes transfer easy, and curricula at various colleges are reviewed by faculty to identify learning and to allow for [articulation](#). We have discovered, however, that the

academic preparation at many community colleges does not provide a smooth transition into Woodbury's classes and curricula. We have begun reexamining how we meet the needs of transfer students and help them rise to the level of performance that we expect from those who matriculate at Woodbury as first-time, first-year students (CFR 2.14). We feel that as we begin to map our learning outcomes more consistently and embed them in rubrics, we will be able to find the gaps with even greater precision and remediate the shortcomings we find.

Academic Writing has already begun this process and is, as a result, instituting a review of student writing at the upper level and the assignment of students to newly approved intermediate writing courses if needed. Knowing that the students who come from the community colleges are likely to fit the socioeconomic status (SES) profile of our first-year students and struggle with many of the same difficulties, and knowing that they may have been exposed in some cases to inferior versions of the same skills and knowledge required, as suggested by recent studies of the community colleges, Woodbury is trying to shape the learning for our transfer students and create a path that will allow them to succeed. This is an area on which we are just beginning to work and have much left to do.

The type of assistance described above is focused on the students' needs, and, we have found, often works best when it eradicates departmental barriers. Collaboration between the academic and student development areas is the key for us, from peer advising and tutoring to early warning and counseling. Established in fall 2005 and currently the home for advising, tutoring and the Institute for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (IETL), [OASIS](#) (Office of Academic Success and Instructional Services) both symbolizes and embodies an approach that crosses lines between personal and academic difficulty, understanding, as we do, that these are often overlapping and amplifying areas. The campus adaptive reuse plan will further integrate our services, by locating counseling and wellness and other aspects of student support within OASIS.

One of the key innovations for OASIS is the integration of teaching and learning with student development. The faculty is intensely interested in closing the loop between student learning and teaching. The IETL was created in fall 2005 to help shape best practices in the classroom and begin working with faculty to develop measurements of effective learning and the tools to improve learning. Recently the director of the IETL was charged with supporting the tutoring program in order to monitor how student difficulties may involve problems in classroom pedagogy. The director can counsel faculty on how better to effect learning as a result.

All programs had gone through Academic Program Review (APR) in 2001 to fulfill the requirements of accreditation that WASC had set. In 2005, the [Academic Program Review](#) was thoroughly revamped, approved by the Board of Trustees in 2006, and implemented in 2007. The APR looks both at educational outcome and the efficiency of resource expenditure to reach that outcome. It mandates that the [Institutional Research](#) office create data files on key indicators to be updated yearly, so that programs can consistently audit their overall effectiveness and so that the APR will constitute a summative look after a formative process (CFR 2.7). At its latest meeting, the Board asked the university faculty and administration to develop an online dashboard of learning effectiveness, comparable to the [dashboard](#) of other key indicators, and to use that dashboard to identify areas for improvement and plans to improve. This task was given to the CAO, the director of the IETL, and the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) committee. The institution should in short time be well on its way to developing a comprehensive university-wide assessment plan.

The faculty has consistently been active in improving the level of student learning and success. The structure of the learning experience at both the course and program level involves the leadership of faculty with their chairs, the faculty's Curriculum Committee, and the EPC. Learning outcomes are published in the [catalog](#). Instructors are required to post course syllabi on line well ahead of the first day of class, and department chairs ensure that these course offerings are aligned to the programs' learning goals. Some departments maintain rubrics for particular skills sets taught for each course. Faculty promotions depend upon documentation of improvements in student learning.

All programs have curricula that culminate in capstone courses. And faculty uses the capstones not only to monitor the success of their students but also to improve the success of their curricula. Recently, for instance, the psychology program suspended its accelerated program after discovering that the learning of students in those programs was inferior to the learning of students in the traditional programs and that neither the curricula nor faculty resources would allow for the type of improvement that would achieve the appropriate outcomes.

Although it is not uniform in quality and regularity yet, faculty members in all programs are involved in the ongoing monitoring of program quality and continuous improvement. Programs offer challenging learning experiences and meet or will meet the standards of professional accrediting agencies, such as [NAAB](#), [AACSB](#), [CIDA](#) and [NASAD](#). Various departments use different methods to assess learning besides the capstone courses. Those methods include portfolios in all the design and architecture programs and internships in all programs. We are also currently implementing [portfolios](#) in other areas, such as writing, to assist students in both formative and summative feedback (2.5; 2.6).

To inform this process of assessment for improved learning, faculty members have been engaged in an ongoing discussion about effective teaching, documentation of effectiveness, and reflection on the results of teaching as a means of improvement. The faculty sets the standards for performance, and those standards are high and applied regularly and with rigor by the faculty personnel committee during reviews for renewal, which occur every one, three or five years (there is no tenure at Woodbury), and for [rank advancement](#), which occurs when faculty feel they have fulfilled the qualifications for rank and submit those qualifications for review.

Woodbury has consistently identified itself as a teaching institution that cares about the quality of the students' education. It has been very mindful that the best teaching comes from a rich interaction with the world and a dialog with one's peers, through practicing one's profession or expanding its boundaries through scholarly and creative work. The synergies among practice, research, and reflection and the communication of knowledge through doing and teaching are stressed in all aspects of campus life and encoded in the [Faculty Handbook](#)'s policies for rank. It should be noted that the standards of rank are used as the standards for contract renewal. The section dealing with rank opens in this way:

Rank as determined by ideals of a teaching scholar

Further distinction among ranks is made by evaluating the candidate's potential or progress toward achieving or fulfilling the ideals of a teaching scholar. Teaching scholars should be recognized scholars in their fields, should serve as role models for junior faculty, and should fulfill the requirements of all three categories listed below (C through E) to this level of achievement. (C-21 ff.)

Those categories are "Teaching Requirements" (which includes "demonstration of enhanced performance in the classroom"), "University Service Requirements," and "Professional and Scholarly Requirements." About this last area, the *Handbook* states this:

The teaching scholar demonstrates . . . activities that go beyond those related to the classroom or to teaching skills. Instead, they demonstrate that the applicant is actively working to contribute to his profession and to establish a "presence" in his or her field. (C-23)

The application for faculty development awards requires a clear linkage between development activities and teaching. Regular, periodic public presentations of the results of faculty development awards, arranged by the Faculty Development committee, demonstrate and celebrate that linkage (CFR 2.9).

The active engagement of faculty with their professions, either through practice or through scholarly and creative work, is crucial in order to make the learning fresh and relevant, connect students with the world they will enter, and provide a model of engagement that students will

emulate. As they serve as models for learners and for learning and because they understand the impact of experiential learning, Woodbury's professors frequently involve students in their research as one way of clearly linking their scholarly or creative activities and student learning. Indeed, the institution strongly believes and articulates its belief in the quality of active learning through research, scholarship, and creativity for both students and faculty. To that end, the university provides funds from many sources to support both faculty and student scholarship, creativity, and achievement, including resources through departments, the Faculty Association, the IETL, Office of Academic Affairs, and special sources like the [Frankel Foundation](#), [sabbatical leaves](#), and external grants, like Title V (CFR 3.4).

Students are also encouraged to join professional associations that are affiliated with the campus, such as the student AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) for the graphic design students and CLEA (Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Estudiantes de Arquitectura) for architecture students. Capstone projects routinely involve a demonstration that students are ready to join the community of scholars and practitioners, whether seen in the national business simulation activities in which business students engage or in the exciting projects that fifth-year architecture students create. Students in animation have an animation showcase. The students in politics and history make a public presentation of their final senior projects (CFR 2.8). The creation of a project that can be presented to a professional audience mixed with teachers, practitioners, and scholars is a fit culmination at a campus that values research and practice and seeks to introduce students to and test the effectiveness of their learning in the community of scholars and practitioners that they will join and who, to a great extent, are the ultimate judges of the outcomes of learning.

In addition, students are given many opportunities to connect to the world throughout their time at the university: lectures, special activities, career development, and internships (CFR 2.11). In our desire to strengthen that connection of our education with the world beyond our walls and in pursuit of the goals outlined in our *Institutional Proposal*, we have restructured our career and internship efforts and repositioned them with alumni relations in the Advancement area. We wished to create an untapped synergy between our undergraduates and our graduates, knowing 1) that alumni can help support the aims of a career office by mentoring current students, and 2) that career and internship activities create the onramp for post-graduate performance that leads to good alumni. At the same time, the Office of Career and Alumni Relations has acted to create stronger links between all of its activities and the activities of the programs. All programs require internships, and all programs and their faculty provide services in careers (CFR 2.13). All programs and their faculty actively work to help the students with professional placement or further education upon graduation. The Office of Career and Alumni Relations, supported by increased staff, serves as a resource for schools, departments and programs. The office actively engages with students and programs through workshops and information sessions, as well as through individual counseling. Both the Board and various groups of stakeholders have expressed eagerness for a graduate placement survey to begin and have an annual iteration. Such a survey would indicate how many of the recent graduates are 1) employed in their field, 2) employed outside their field, 3) continuing their education, or 4) unemployed. Although the new articulations of the career and alumni office and its services are still in early stages, the level of services offered and the level of collaboration between the academic programs and the career and internship offices have never been higher.

The development of the new relationship between the academic and student development sides of the institution has also enhanced the alignment. As part of restructuring, the Academic Support and Student Affairs units were combined. During their planning process as part of the MAP, a new [Office of Student Development](#) emerged. Some of the collaborations between that area and faculty have been outlined in the advising and orientation pieces above. But the level of full collaboration is much higher and more stunning.

The Student Development unit adopted the six educational principles and has begun to actively work with faculty in developing programs in areas such as diversity, social responsibility (in

particular environmental awareness), travel, and transdisciplinarity (CFR 1.5 & 2.2). The area of academic honesty, for instance, involves collaboration between Student Development staff and faculty, with a strong partnership forged among the writing program, the library (information literacy), the instructors, and the student conduct officer. Academic honesty serves as a model, in one way, of how learning environment and sensitivity to the learner are crucial for the best learning, for academic dishonesty makes clear that some actions not only spoil personal performance but can corrupt the basis of community. Ethical responsibility is not simply a matter of individual values or the subject of a class. Ethical responsibility is essential for a community based on good citizenship and on behaviors that support the general good. The units operate to help each other understand and fashion the integrated student (CFR 2.11).

Evidence of the community's bedrock belief in the importance of the integration of personal development and academic development, the cognitive and behavioral, can be seen in the current examination of the general education curriculum. Woodbury has a robust but fairly ordinary general education curriculum. Having claimed Woodbury's educational principles, we feel we need a new general education experience that will help our students embody those educational principles. This effort is guided by the Student Success Task Force, a collaboration of the members of the faculty, members of the Office of Student Development, and selected student leaders, a partnership that was ratified by the faculty association.

The community wants to see general education permeate the entire curriculum and experience of our students and not be confined to a set of courses *per se* or to the classroom. We already have a number of efforts where cross-disciplinary collaborations have been effected and the focus has joined the academic and the personal. These include [SENCER](#), which fosters civic responsibility through a collaboration of natural science, social science, and humanities to solve basic human problems; various design and architecture studios that focus on solving real world problems; and architecture's innovative travel abroad program that welds many forms of learning, shapes personal behavior, and, according to the testimony of participants, transforms students (CFR 2.2).

The centrality of the student, his or her learning, and the engagement of the university consciously in the work of fashioning the student are striking. Our Enrollment Services Group, which puts together staff from every major area of the university, along with faculty, monitors institutional processes so that we can be assured that they best serve the students. Recently, in one of its ongoing attempts to see the world from the standpoint of its students, the university submitted itself to a "mystery shopper" test to see where we could make improvements in service (CFR 2.13).

In summary, the earnest attempt by the university to understand its students, to focus its processes on the success of its students, and to break down all the structural barriers that impede success and create new structures that promote success are everywhere apparent. Students are immersed in a curriculum and environment that takes learning as the paramount good, but that does not confine that good to a single discipline, single department, or single unit. The learning experience at Woodbury connects learning with the world of work and a world where new knowledge is always being made in the fields that students seek to join. It connects that learning with the specific students it teaches. The university's high marks on the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) testify to the active learning that takes place.

While the monitoring of the effectiveness of that experience is persistent and wide spread, we are acting to make it uniform in all learning activities at all levels. Again, much needs to be done. The community generally has expressed its hope for the successful completion of the Master Academic Plan. Still, the progress towards the goal is persistent, purposeful, and rapid.

The process of understanding our identity, aligning to our identity, and measuring our effectiveness began before the WASC reaffirmation activities. Those activities have been motivated

by nothing more nor less than the community's overpowering drive to give its students the very best start on a path that will change them, change those around them, and change the world for the better.

IV. Woodbury Organizes, Invests, and Develops Its Human, Physical, Technological and Financial Resources to Affect and Sustain Its Purpose (Standard Three)

The alignment of resources is crucial in any institution in order to have impact. When institutions are not resource-rich, alignment becomes a matter of life or death. Woodbury University existed for nearly 100 years as a privately owned, for-profit institution. While its program array, the population it serves and its impact have not changed, Woodbury's economic model shifted when it became a non-profit. As a tuition-driven institution with a more complex and enlarged mission of service to the students, the university began to realize it needed to do three things: 1) increase its resources wisely; 2) leverage its resources fully; and 3) use its resources strategically. The following essay responds to Standard Three and develops our theme of alignment.

Increasing its Resources Wisely.

Increasing the Financial Resource. In 2001, around the time of WASC's special visit for reaffirmation, the president articulated his strategic vision. It espoused a need to build an endowment to match the operating budget. At that time, the president believed that if the university's endowment could reach \$10 million, it would be able to draw a modest portion of that to help support its operations. The ratio of the endowment to the operating budget has increased every year, but the operating budget has increased as well. Thus, with nearly \$14 million in the endowment and with the endowment per student increasing each year, our endowment is only 40% of our operations. Our new target to draw from the endowment is \$20 million. The university has been building its resource base through increasing development results, handling investment income carefully, and edging up tuition cautiously.

In addition, recent independent reviews have affirmed the university's capacity to manage its assets and maintain an exceptionally strong financial position. For example, the university's recent bond refinancing was given an "investment grade" rating by both Standard & Poor's and Moody's. Standard & Poor's noted, "Good operational performance with a history of operating surpluses" and "a solid, experienced management team." Moreover, Moody's affirmed the university's growth strategy, seeing "significant enrollment growth and strengthening demand for the university's specialized programs in architecture and design, and business," plus a strategic location in Burbank, California, "with a strong student draw from the demographically bustling Southern California region." Both rating agencies noted the growth in endowment, much of which has been funded by a fiscal discipline of budgetary contributions to endowment from operations on an annual basis.

Yet the university remains heavily tuition dependent, vulnerable to changes in enrollment, and vulnerable to economic conditions in the state. Much of this vulnerability is compounded because our core students are themselves financially vulnerable. Roughly 85% of Woodbury students receive financial aid and over 50% of our undergraduate students qualify for Cal Grants and come from households with incomes of less than \$36,000 a year. Between Cal Grants, Pell Grants, and institutional aid for good high school performance, the unmet need for a financially vulnerable student on entering is low. We carefully set our tuition and our institutional aid package to meet the needs of our market.

Still, once we take on a student who has financial vulnerability, that vulnerability becomes one key factor in his or her ability to persist. Failure to satisfy the conditions of the grants and aid, which are based on academic performance, unbalances the delicate situation of a student. An average student, a 2.50 GPA student in college, who by all measures benefits from an education, will not find

sufficient resources in national, state or institutional aid to allow him or her to persist. At the same time, because the level of aid gets locked in on admission, the amount of unmet need can widen as the student progresses. Couple this with the academic vulnerability of students who graduate from high school with a 3.0 GPA, especially those from minority populations, the problem of persistence is even greater. One can easily understand why the setting of tuition, the selection of students, and financial packaging require constant attention, and why the types of student services that help students persist without compromising standards are crucial not only for the success of the students, but for the success of the university. Woodbury has clearly done well in finding ways to sustain itself through tuition and to support its students through its programs, its aid, and its efforts in finding aid.

Increasing the Human Resource. In 1998, Woodbury University employed 28 full-time faculty to teach approximately 908 FTE students. In 2001, the number of faculty had jumped to 36 and FTE students to 1151. Since then, the FTE of full- and part-time faculty has remained more or less constant while the credit hour production has increased. In 2001, the president approved the increase of full-time faculty at the rate of 1 to each 750 credits that were taught during the fall and spring semesters. That rate has led the university to grow to 50 full-time faculty members today for an enrollment of 1407.

The president and Board believe that the faculty is the most important human resource on the campus. The [by-laws](#) of the university entrust the faculty association with the duties of educational leadership and stewardship. The president of the faculty serves as the dean of the faculty and is invited to all Board meetings and attends the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the Board as a member. The faculty governance structure is set up to allow faculty to monitor and make recommendations about all academic matters pertaining to quality. Their recommendations about programs, personnel, and policy flow to the CEO in orderly fashion (CFR 3.11).

We have also increased the number of support staff in the Student Development area. In particular, we created advising positions, which provide services and coordinate peer-mentoring activities; we added staff for academic support; and we added to our counseling staff. Careers and internships moved to the advancement area and added staff. Advancement has been a particular area for development. Following our strategic plan, we have focused additional staff on alumni and created development positions that coordinate with each of the major academic areas. In the area of information technology, we have probably made the greatest investment in the human resource, moving into our E & G budget positions that had been funded through Title V. Our administrative support staff has also increased in the faculty area from three positions to six.

In his strategic objectives from 2001, the president also identified the expansion of the [Board of Trustees](#). The president, in consultation with the chairman of the Board and the vice president for University Advancement, has added to the Board trustees who have crucial backgrounds to help the university, display a willingness to invest in the advancement of the university, and possess the resources to do so. Each year, the president's goals include identifying and recruiting appropriate trustees (CFR 3.9).

The university could use additional administrative support staff, as well as additional staff in information technology and in facilities. We also know that we require more full-time faculty to support the university's various quality initiatives and to allow greater sustainability of the academic quality in the programs and in the institution generally. Still, the progress made in all areas is substantial, and the university needs are part of our strategic plan and will find greater elaboration through the MAP process.

Increasing the Physical Resource. The last WASC report identified the university's informational infrastructure as an area of weakness. Thanks to a Title V grant, in addition to hiring new support staff, Woodbury was able to build a new network, procure new hardware and current software, and

develop new spaces and programs that allow faculty, staff and students to gather information about the campus and the world, to interact at a distance with all university offices, to register for classes and check progress and finances asynchronously and at a distance, and to extend the learning process. What Title V allowed us to accomplish has been fully integrated into the campus budget and elaborated through a strategic planning process that has been iterative and managed by the activities of a campus-wide technology committee, composed of faculty, students, and staff. The committee gathers information about current needs, scans the horizon for emerging needs, and makes recommendations as part of the budgetary process.

The presence of technology can be seen in the number of [general computer labs](#) and specialized labs that support the various programs as well as in OASIS and the writing center. More significant, perhaps, is the development of teaching spaces, such as computer classrooms, smart classrooms, a laser cutter, and render farm, that are used for everything from the teaching of history and business to the teaching of fashion, animation, and architecture. The library has its own computer classroom where students take their required [Information Literacy course](#). Increasingly, the library is becoming the campus commons and collaborative research center, and we are actively seeking ways to help with that transformation, including preparing a new Title V proposal (CFR 3.6).

On the administrative side, the ability of the offices to talk to students, faculty and staff through IQ Web and through the new university portal has made a big difference in both the efficiency and effectiveness of communication (CFR 3.7).

The university also had developed a [Master Campus Plan](#) to guide its capital development. In 2004, with increases in its studio classes and the university's commitment to provide every architecture and design student an individual space, Woodbury began to plan for expansion. In 2005-06, it reallocated space internally and erected a temporary structure (Kirby Hall) to house Interior Architecture classes. In 2006-07, it sought to expand the classroom and studio space by building new complexes for the Business and Architecture programs, thereby freeing up other campus areas for adaptive reuse. Through selling bonds, raising money from private donors, and successfully getting support from foundations such as Kresge, Ahmanson, and Fletcher Jones, Woodbury has been able to build a dedicated 22,000 square-foot facility for the School of Business and a 15,000 square-foot facility for the School of Architecture.

The new buildings will officially open in fall 2008. The School of Business will gain space for seminars and teleconferencing and will be able to consolidate classes and faculty. The new School of Architecture building will finish the architecture complex and support the school's problem-based pedagogy, providing small group spaces for collaborative work as well as individual studio space that all architecture students enjoy. Plans for the architecture complex include laboratory space so students may draw on the latest in fabrication technologies such as 3D milling and 3D printing. In addition, a 225-seat auditorium adjacent to the School of Business will also open and be available for the whole campus. The School of Architecture building will also include a new assembly space.

An [adaptive reuse plan](#) that follows the initial ideas in the Master Academic Plan will convert parts of the campus to better use by the programs and by various units. At this point, for instance, Wilshire Hall will be converted into faculty offices and be part of a Faculty Complex built around a common courtyard that the Business building and it will share. The vacated Faculty Center will become the new home for OASIS and Student Development, while much of Cabrini Hall and all of the former School of Business building will form part of a complex dedicated to the School of Media, Culture & Design.

Leveraging its Resources.

The bonding of the university is a good example of the way the university has used its assets to leverage more resources. The alumni are another resource that is being leveraged through the activities of the advancement office. The participation of alumni has more than doubled over the last

few years and the rate of donations from stakeholders has increased. The building initiative could not have occurred without a focused and concerted effort on the part of many members of the institution. That fundraising initiative, the university's first, has served as both cause and effect for greater stakeholder participation.

The last few years have seen the university also leverage its location. Woodbury sits a very few miles from the various businesses and industries that its disciplines are relevant to. For instance, the university holds the judging sessions for the Annies, animation's Oscars. The university has formed greater affiliations with many businesses and industries and especially with the organizations that promote the area's growth. The architecture program, for example, has membership in all the local AIA chapters and has created very close relations with the San Fernando Valley AIA, which recently honored exclusively nine of the program's students at a public banquet in the valley. Now the architecture program and valley economic development organizations are discussing a partnership in local redevelopment efforts. The university belongs to the Burbank Chamber of Commerce and the Valley Economic Alliance, in both of which organizations members of the administration have leadership positions, and the university has held workshops for the organizations on campus. Key members of the community also sit on the President's Executive Council, which creates a link between the university and the community. The result of these links has been greater support and recognition. Woodbury University was recognized with Burbank Unified School District's 2007 Partner of the Year award. "At Woodbury University, we take pride in our role in the community," President Kenneth R. Nielsen told the crowd as the award was presented.

The development of talent is another way that an organization leverages resources. The accomplishments of the students have become a greater focus for the university. For instance, among other awards this year, in architecture a Woodbury student won the LA-AIA competition entitled "2x8: Vert," which included entries for both graduate and undergraduate programs from around the state, and Woodbury teams won three of the six prizes in the 2007 ACSA/AISC design competition, which drew more than 400 submissions from 50 universities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Every program has such accomplishments that are chronicled, along with faculty achievements, in the quarterly [Academic Update](#), publications that are used to promote the university among various groups.

Faculty is the resource that has the greatest capacity to advance the institution through its own advancement. Not only are the faculty dedicated and engaged teachers whose passion and talents can be cultivated and rewarded, but their capacity to affect their professions and disciplines is immense, and the power of those contributions adds greater impact to their teaching and greater luster to the university. The guidelines for contract renewal and advancement flow from the needs of the institution to advance, and the institution provides support for those activities that allow its members to make the greatest contribution. Faculty personnel policies for contract renewal and promotion clearly outline the expectations for growth. Evaluation of faculty is regular and rigorous (CFR 3.3).

The university, recognizing the importance of the asset it has in its faculty, provides opportunities for faculty to develop in all the areas crucial to their best performance. In the case of teaching, the IETL provides individual support and also sponsors initiatives like the Faculty Learning Communities. In spring 2006 and in the following fall, the IETL brought together groups of 14 and 12 faculty members to read and reflect on teaching and learning with a view to becoming more effective teachers and documenting that effectiveness. The development of talent is also seen in the opportunities for meaningful leadership afforded to faculty in a variety of leadership areas, as heads of presidential initiatives, accreditation task forces, and faculty governance. It is seen in the many sources of support for [faculty development](#), from departmental and Faculty Association funds to special sources like the [Frankel Foundation](#) (CFR 3.4).

By the same token, we have cultivated a class of adjuncts who come from the professions to teach and for whom teaching and the attachment to an academic community enhance their practice. Part-time instructors as well as full-time are constituted as part of governance under the university by-

laws and under the faculty's own governance constitution. In 2004, the university created a new classification of part-time faculty, participating adjuncts. These adjuncts receive 9-month contracts that include compensation for teaching as well as for other activities that full-time faculty undertake as part of their load, such as advising. In exchange, participating adjuncts engage in meaningful ways at the program as well as university level, including involvement in campus development activities, like the Faculty Learning Communities.

The staff as well has increasingly been given greater responsibilities as the institution has tried to decentralize and empower its workforce. This has increased the productivity of the institution. One result of this increasing responsibility has been the university's ability to promote talent within. In enrollment services, the business office, facilities, student development, and administrative support, staff members have advanced to higher levels of authority within the organization as a result of mentoring and trust by supervisors. The president has also done an excellent job in delegating responsibility and creating accountability in his executive staff. He has attracted people with impressive credentials, created overlapping areas of interest among them, and promoted teamwork. The result has been an effective and harmonious approach to problem solving.

Recruiting of staff is managed with formal job descriptions and selection committees. All new employees receive comprehensive orientations and receive further training within departments and by campus-level programs. A buddy system is used to integrate new staff employees into the campus environment. Employee attrition rates demonstrate that people like to work here. Exit interviews reveal that staff members usually leave because of a lack of recognition or because of communication problems with a supervisor. HR supports an open door policy and formal guidelines for handling employee grievances. Staff employees receive competitive salaries and compensation through a comprehensive job classification system comparable to peer institutions. Support for continued development is provided through funding for travel and training, as well as through a tuition remission program (CFR 3.3).

Evaluation of the senior staff is done semi-annually by the president, and the president is reviewed annually by the Board, with a semi-annual formative review as well. Department heads conduct reviews of their staff. These reviews occur routinely for all new employees and employees who move up organizationally. Reviews are also routine for those who are struggling to meet the demands of their position. However, the university does not uniformly enforce its formal, required periodic performance appraisal process for employees who are continuing in their position (CFR 3.3). Nor does it have reviews of unit heads below the senior staff. These are areas that the Capacity and Preparatory Review Committee noted as needing improvement and for which the university will need to develop a plan.

Finally, the [Board of Trustees](#) for Woodbury is one of the university's most extraordinary assets. The Board has encouraged the expansion of quality in all areas, has played a key role in planning for resource growth and use, and has shown active interest in the efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as the opportunities and success for students and faculty. Their 100% support for the last building initiative and their new plan to become conversant in the area of the assessment of learning so that they exercise full fiduciary responsibility provide models of good board membership as well as an important resource for the university (CFR 3.9).

Using its Resources Strategically (CFR 3.5)

In 2003, Woodbury University undertook a widely participatory strategic planning process that in 2004 culminated in a [plan](#) that has guided both the efforts to increase and leverage resources and the allocation of those increasing resources.

Incremental tuition increases that do not overtake the financial realities of our students have allowed for investment in the university's strategic purposes. A community-wide [budgeting process](#) establishes the strategic focus of every department that is aligned to their missions and objectives.

Developed in collaboration with the president's cabinet and led by the vice president for Finance and Administration, the process rolls up budgets from each unit into a final budget. Some departments, like technology, employ a [campus-wide committee](#) to produce a prioritized list of strategic needs. Each unit presents a budget to the appropriate vice president. Those budgets are based on the previous year's actual budget, with areas of increased operational need and strategic investment noted. Those submissions are rolled up into a single university budget. After the Board of Trustees approves tuition and fees, the president's cabinet produces the operating budget.

To focus the additional allocations strategically, the needs articulated in the underlying budgets are submitted to the President's [Budget Advisory Committee](#), which comprises representatives from all units and is chaired by a faculty member. The vice president of Finance and Administration and the CAO serve as ex-officio members and provide the committee with data and background information for their deliberations. The results of the process are prioritized and mapped to the strategic plan. The cabinet uses this document to build the budget for the coming year. New allocations for ongoing expense items, such as the addition of faculty and staff, as well as for capital improvements, such as the purchase of new technologies, become part of the budget in this way. Each year the advisory committee receives a report on how its recommendations were used. The results show that the major strategic needs have been focused on and taken care of.

Throughout the university, the strategic plan has guided new investment. In areas such as faculty, for instance, we have followed the guidelines for the appropriate specialized accreditation when considering the qualifications of faculty, the size of classes, and the ratios of part-time to full-time faculty, as well as the educational process and product. When the Council of Interior Design Accreditation visited two years ago, they found that although the Interior Architecture program enrolled nearly 90 majors and had only 2.5 full-time faculty, one of whom serves as the chair, the quality of that faculty and its engagement, along with the quality and engagement of its part-time faculty, were sufficient to assure the program's overall quality (CFR 3.1). This is not to say that the university is satisfied to meet the threshold requirements. After satisfying those, our intention is to move beyond them. We recently committed fresh resources to comply with the standards of NASAD accreditation, but our intention is to continue to grow the quality of those programs by growing the quality of the financial, human, and physical resources at their disposal. As a case in point, we are building resources to move from meeting the standards of ACBSP accreditation to meeting the higher accrediting standards of AACSB, which organization has found us eligible to apply.

We have also been attentive to the needs of programs in the liberal arts and especially to those non-degree programs in general education whose improvement have impact on all the students. For instance, we added a full-time faculty member in art history and recruited a head for a comprehensive academic writing initiative.

At the same time that we have used the strategic plan to guide decisions about resource allocation for faculty, we have also used it to guide strategic hiring in other areas. The staff expansions mentioned earlier come from our strategic plan: a second person in the careers area, a half-time counselor who specializes in minorities, an institutional researcher who has expertise in educational assessment. We have created new administrative support positions and added recruitment staff to work directly with our MBA students. Other staff needs in the areas of facilities, for instance, remain, but we have been making plans to address these (CFR 3.1).

Two other major initiatives are worthy of comment. In keeping with our strategic plan and the advice of the President's Budget Advisory Committee, Woodbury University has undertaken a compensation and workload study. While Woodbury's faculty workload falls within the range of AAUP and ACE standards and while its compensation is within the range of some comparable local colleges and universities, the results of our study will bring compensation and workload into closer alignment with those universities and colleges with whom we compete for faculty and with whom we seek to compete for students and reputation. The committee of faculty and administrators who are considering the results of the study understands that the type of work that faculty does affects the type

of compensation that they seek and that the university must recognize the value of that labor through allotting appropriate time and remuneration. We are lucky to have as members of the committee the director of Human Resources and a faculty member from Business whose field of specialization is Human Resources.

The second major initiative that grows out of the strategic plan is the broadening of the building initiative into a broadband capital campaign. The case statement for that campaign is now being developed for a May 2008 deadline and will focus on creating the resources that will sustain the university's quest for quality education—through greater support for our needy students, through a larger faculty force with compensation that adds appeal to a place attractive because of the power of faculty to effect change, and through programming that connects students, faculty, and staff more firmly to their communities and the globe.

The leadership of the president personally and through his administration has been responsible for the increase in resources as well as their fuller strategic use. He and his staff have developed a leadership approach that under a unified vision cedes the power of planning and execution to those who serve at the front lines, the faculty and staff of the university. He provides the resources and encouragement to effect change and promote success. He helps assure that progress is monitored and rewarded (CFR 3.10).

Of course, the greatest resource of the university is the students. It is not simply a matter of their bringing tuition and other revenue. The university's reputation and future resources depend upon the success that its educational processes produce in its students. As university leaders routinely tell the students, Woodbury can only grow strong by its students, not by who they are when they enter, but by who they are when they graduate. They carry our hopes and dreams into their communities. They carry our name and our brand. So they must be good. We must be certain that they are good.

That process and product was within the scope of the NASAD visit. Although we will not know the full result of that visit until April or May, we do know some of the findings. The NASAD team found that Woodbury's students left with strong portfolios of BFA-level work. What they found remarkable was that they entered with no portfolio at all. The team found unique both whom we admit and what they are able to accomplish at Woodbury.

As we also tell our students when they begin, we admit only those who we feel can succeed, who can benefit from the education we provide. The focus of the community is on that success. That success, our students' success, is our number one resource to increase, leverage, and use strategically.

In summary, the development of resources, leveraging of resources, and the focused use of resources are crucial for any university but of paramount importance for a university that is tuition dependent. The development human capital, especially of faculty, staff, and students, is crucial for the success on which Woodbury's existence depends. Challenges exist in meeting the needs of the university. The university brings to this challenge important assets, in the people it engages in its community and in their understanding of the university's critical path. The university has a clear sense of its needs, has increasingly been able to meet those needs, and has energized all parts of its community to create plans and processes that promise that the needs can continue to be met. The completion of the Master Academic Plan and the development of a broadband capital campaign will create new resources and invigorate the strategic planning process at all levels. Regular evaluation of all members of the university community will improve performance. Woodbury has reached a stable place, but it is not a place to rest. We have a long journey ahead to find the full resources to meet the dreams and aspirations of all our stakeholders.

V. Woodbury Continuously Reflects and Improves Its Impact (Standard Four)

In our *Institutional Proposal*, Woodbury challenged itself to normalize the assessments that already fill the campus and that provide us rich feedback. In the *Institutional Proposal*, the community called upon itself to know itself and where its aspirations lead it and, having affirmed those matters, to create structures, routines and policies of data collection, reflection, and action that are aligned, regular, and iterative and that promise to lead us forward. Before the proposal, the university had begun to draw up a rigorous plan of [Academic Program Review](#) to replace the older plan that had produced the last set. In addition, it had put on the list of strategic needs an [institutional researcher](#).

Woodbury's *Institutional Proposal*, in other words, was not the product of the accreditation process *per se*, but the product of a desire to improve. Accreditation aligns with our motive and helps us to measure our growth. As the visiting team from [NASAD](#) noted, the faculty, staff and administration of the university have dedicated themselves to improvement, to advancing the quality and impact of the institution. They have done so because they believe in the value of that activity. This essay is meant to measure where we have come in assessment, describe where we want to be, and explain how we will get there. It addresses Standard Four and all four themes, but especially the themes of success and effectiveness.

Since WASC's last visit in 2001, Woodbury has continued the hard work of sustaining and advancing the university. That kind of work requires a hard look at the realities of one's existence and cannot be undertaken without thoughtfully scanning the internal and external environments, collecting data, and forming plans. The success Woodbury has increasingly enjoyed in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community — the signs of which are visible everywhere — corroborates the success of its planning. The past seven years tell the story of Woodbury's growing capacity to plan and of its greater and more coordinated efforts to analyze data for the sake of improving the educational purposes of the institution at all levels: the student, the course, the curriculum, and the supportive infrastructures of finance, people, equipment, and processes.

In various areas, data had been captured and evaluated in regular periods. Besides the data captured for the [IPEDS](#), the university has had the historical patterns of enrollment, divided by program, part-time and full-time students, and credit hours. Those data have been used to trace patterns of change that had implications for staffing and resources. For instance, the growing number of full-time students and traditional students in key programs became an important factor in our approach to restructuring aspects of student services. The surging architecture enrollments and the need to increase the business enrollments resulted in plans to add space and to structure the space to achieve strategic goals in enrollment. The 2004-05 strategic plan for the School of Business scanned the internal and external environments and the patterns of enrollment and came up with a plan that the university has been following with success, which included a major investment in key areas of the school that would advance its quality (CFR 4.5).

Indeed during the past ten years, the university has initiated many community-wide planning efforts. The strategic planning in 1996 and 2000 embraced the entire community and resulted in strong blueprints for advancing the institution. The university's two Title V applications grew out of a commitment to add greater intentionality to the teaching and learning of our specific student population in ways that would benefit the majority of our students who come from similar social, economic, and cultural conditions. Those projects sought to add student and academic support, to create a richer technological infrastructure, and to provide a smoother transition from two-year colleges to the four-year university. Those projects were the result of extensive planning. For the

projects to be funded initially and to receive funds each year, the university was required to monitor and to document continuous improvement and success that resulted from the funded activities. This required institutional research and the use of the results to improve performance. The process of data gathering, reflection and improvement has continued and spread.

The year 2003 was, in many respects, a watershed, for Woodbury University decided to align its plan around a single goal: the learning of its students (CFR 4.2). The strategic planning process that yielded the 2004 plan involved the whole community. It was the forerunner of the process that led to the articulation of the university's identity in 2005. As indicated elsewhere, the strategic planning process has been participatory and iterative. In the last years, aside from producing a strategic plan, the community has been involved in the WASC reaffirmation process, in many specialized accreditation self-studies, and in the preparation of the [Master Academic Plan](#). As also outlined in earlier essays, the institutional priorities derive from the strategic plan and form the framework for the review of all allocations of resources. On behalf of the president, the vice president of Information Technology and Planning works with all the vice presidents to assure that progress in meeting the institutional goals is tracked (CFR 4.1).

One of the priorities in the strategic plan of 2004 had been the hiring of an institutional researcher who would oversee an office to compile data that the university routinely collects and to assure that the appropriate data was being collected. The position would help the university create and manage useful data tables that would allow various parts of the institution to review the efficacy of their activities and make revisions that would improve them. The position has been filled and the IR office has begun to function as we hoped.

Several institutional initiatives determine what data is collected. One of them is the creation of institutional [key performance indicators](#). In 2005, the president undertook an initiative to have each unit identify key performance indicators. The VP for Information Technology and Planning was charged with working with the various vice presidents on this project. The indicators were to be benchmarked, where possible, and goals for performance set so that performance could be tracked. The various tables were interactive between various departments so that key ratios could be watched and managed. The key performance indicators (KPIs) aid unit heads and the president in monitoring performance. The senior staff reviews the indicators periodically in order to make adjustments to operations that will improve performance. In addition, the KPIs are rolled up into a dashboard that the president, senior staff, and Board can monitor (CFR 4.5).

In fall 2003, the university adopted new curriculum and program approval processes that emulate best practices as outlined in such documents as WASC's on substantive change. In 2005, the faculty, administration and Board of Trustees approved the new Academic Program Review process. The policy on Academic Program Review is one initiative that determines data that should be collected by the Office of Institutional Research. Individuals have the capacity to run reports from the data, but the institutional researcher also creates special reports as needed. All information relevant to student learning, including the reports and measures required by accreditation agencies, are collected and stored. The IR office is beginning to implement a student-learning assessment component, and the development of more sophisticated measures of student learning is underway (CFR 4.3; 4.4).

For its reaffirmation project, Woodbury stated that its pre-eminent goal was the establishment of the ability to assess instructional effectiveness and student success with the view of continuously improving both. We wanted to develop a holistic approach to student success so that educational ends effected both personal and professional success, and we wanted to measure success so we could improve the opportunities for success. To monitor the ongoing impact of our educational environment and processes, we wanted to collect feedback from many sources, direct and indirect, including alumni, from whom we wanted to learn about lifelong impact.

At the same time that we sought to measure the overall effectiveness of Woodbury's education, we wanted to assure effective student learning at the levels of the class session, the course, and the program. This meant that programs that did not have comprehensive and ongoing assessment to feed the key types of review needed to implement such assessments. It meant that faculty who did not monitor the success of learning during and after their classes so that they could improve learning would need to learn how to do so. It meant that at every level the faculty would assess in order to determine what teaching and learning experiences and environments best conduced to the continuing development of the student.

In order to effect this focus on student learning and success and its continuous improvement, we believed that we needed to explore more intentionally the various modalities of learning on the campus as well as provide faculty with the tools of instructional success and the chairs and faculty the tools for assessing curricular success.

In 2004, the faculty had begun to consider the data used to assess teaching and learning in the personnel review process. Personnel review requires that instructors document their teaching effectiveness. The review at that time had demanded two pieces of evidence for effectiveness, one of which was student evaluations. The dean of the faculty working with the personnel committee and the CAO developed a new method for the submission of materials for renewal and advancement. That new method was ratified by the faculty and approved by the administration. In it, faculty would create a portfolio that documented effective teaching. It would also contain the teacher's philosophical position on teaching, reflection on actual teaching, and statements about areas for improvement and goals for the coming year. That portfolio would include, but not rely on, student evaluations and would use classroom observation as well. It might include samples of student work at the various levels of performance. The director of the IETL and several chairs created rubrics for classroom observation. In some cases, the director of the IETL or a department chair has worked with faculty, observing their classes, to improve their teaching.

In the year following, spring 2005, the IETL sought to improve the usefulness of faculty portfolios through a Faculty Learning Community (FLC) that comprised 14 faculty members. The members came from every discipline of the university and included chairs, full-time faculty, and part-time faculty. The FLC's stated goal was to train faculty to move from paper to electronic portfolios. However, the subject for the FLC was not the use of electronic portfolios *per se*, but effective teaching and its documentation. The FLC studied models of learning and assessment, including Mary Allen's *Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education*. There followed an FLC of 12 faculty members in fall 2005. Since then, the faculty has worked on various projects to try to involve the whole faculty in moving to the [electronic portfolios](#), but the progress is slow (CFR 4.6). From the standpoint of the university, however, the project to create greater assessment of teaching and learning has been successful. The FLCs in particular established a knowledgeable core of faculty who serve as a resource for improving teaching assessment and who, through their work, model good assessment and influence the campus culture. The success can be seen in the way the Curriculum Committee now scrutinizes syllabi for learning outcomes, learning activities linked to the outcomes, and assessment. The FLC's work also created a scholarly interest in pedagogy that is reflected in the faculty development awards that the faculty association has given, the sabbatical projects that the university has supported, and the papers and presentations that faculty members have made.

Having examined the nature of teaching and begun more fully to understand and document effective teaching in order to improve effectiveness, the members of the community, led by the faculty, have turned their attention to the intentional design of curriculum. Again, processes for curriculum assessment had been in place earlier, including an Academic Program Review created in 2000, the requirement that all programs have a capstone course and internship or work experiences, and the periodic self-study for specialized accreditation. The next step, which is underway, is to align assessment. The newly formed Educational Effectiveness Review committee has as its charge assuring that the structures for assessment lead to meaningful curricular and course review. The deans

and directors, chairs, and faculty are engaged in a process to create aligned structures for assessment so that the results can be shared in meaningful ways across multiple constituencies for both quality assurance and quality improvement (CFR 4.7). The work of Mary Allen has again served as a model for us. Programs that have not done so already will map outcomes to curriculum and develop rubrics to assess outcomes.

Some academic programs, Interior Architecture for instance, have produced richly inventive and intelligent maps that show the multi-dimensional formation of skill, knowledge, and understanding in the curriculum. Some programs, such as the design foundation, review their curriculum every year in a process that involves design and foundation faculty and chairs examining the syllabi and the work, finding areas for improving the curriculum, and thinking of ways to improve the transfer of learning from foundation work to coursework in the programs.

Writing too serves as a model for the constant monitoring of the success of the curriculum and services it provides. Writing has been one of the leading programs outside of architecture and design to require learning portfolios that demonstrate learning outcomes and the processes of learning. As a new general education curriculum is created, mapping and assessment will become even more important. The campus will use an infusion model that provides foundational courses but then makes all faculty responsible for the general education of the students and makes each program curriculum accountable for seeing that knowledge, skills, and understanding are not only transferred, but continually developed. Writing has been evolving such an approach, and its plan for systematically mapping the development of skills and assessing those skills using rubrics may offer a model for the rest of the university.

Another step to aid assessment will be for each school or program to develop boards of advisors that can help judge curriculum and student work from the vantage point of the world that the university serves. In particular, the School of Business has used its board to review curricular revisions and to review work from the capstone classes. The creation of the careers and alumni office has also allowed us to gather more information about the effectiveness of our programs and their impact in the community (CFR 4.8). This indirect measurement, using feedback from alumni and other stakeholders, has been part of the specialized accreditation efforts, but it is also an institution-wide standard for assessment as part of Woodbury's Academic Program Review process.

Concurrent with this effort to improve assessments of learning in the classroom and in the curriculum, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to assess the university's learning environment. In fall 2004, the institution made the commitment to administer NSSE. When offered a chance to join the [Building Engagement and Attainment of Minority Students](#) project (BEAMS), the university embraced it. BEAMS provides expert assistance in analyzing the data to improve institutional performance, and it educates members of the campus in that analysis so that it can be ongoing. A large group of faculty, staff, and students volunteered to work on the project.

The main lesson from the NSSE data was that curricular and co-curricular activities did not intersect as often as would be useful to our students. Our students tend to do much less socializing on campus or outside of the classroom than do other college and university students. Woodbury students watch much less television and go to many fewer parties than the comparison cohort, for instance. Yet the academic process, studios in particular, creates a social life for many. To the campus, with its focus on developing the personal as well as the professional and producing an integrated student, these findings presented both an opportunity and challenge. The questions were how to tap and expand the academic-social processes that exist in places like studio and how to make a clearer connection between personal and academic development (CFR 2.11 & 4.6).

The BEAMS group evolved into the Student Success Task Force (SSTF), which became a standing committee to monitor student success and suggest improvements. The first step in

understanding how best to use the non-academic environment to foster learning that linked to the academic environment was to gather additional data, which the committee did using surveys and focus groups. In spring 2007, as part of this activity, SSTF sponsored faculty, student, and staff learning communities to study and reflect on how learning occurs inside and outside the campus. Those results are being used as the committee undertakes the next charge, which is to examine the general education curriculum and make a recommendation about restructuring that (CFR 4.6). We expect that SSTF will further evolve to help oversee and evaluate the general education of Woodbury's students from both a cognitive and behavioral standpoint, looking at outcomes in both areas to see that we are graduating students who fulfill the six educational principles that the university established when it began the latest stage of its journey (CFR 4.6).

In summary, Woodbury is an agile institution. Its agility depends on willingness to take risks and assess the results so that it may deploy its assets in the best activities for the best effect. This is the secret of great teaching, great programs, and great universities. We aspire to all three, and, after all our hard work, we believe that we are close to those goals, though much remains to be done to fully institutionalize the progress we have made and continue that progress. We know that this agility and our unique identity make us different from many other universities in many ways, but we feel that differentiation gives us a unique niche and an effective way to promote transformation. Being different, the university requires great care in supporting its claim to excellence. The development of multiple assessments of effectiveness, then, is part of the ongoing development of the university as well an important way to say to stakeholders: "Woodbury is fulfilling its promises."

VI. Conclusion

At the end of our essay on Standard 4, we assert that “[b]eing different, the university requires great care in supporting its claim to excellence.” Our difference poses a unique set of challenges. One challenge is the need to provide measurements of excellence that have external validation. Seeking the “gold standard” of specialized accreditations is meant to garner testimony to an educational process and result that rivals the best universities in spite of the disparity between our inputs and theirs. Our poor and minority students would not be able to go on to Harvard, MIT, Columbia, and Penn without the imprimatur of NAAB or CIDA or, we hope, NASAD or AACSB. Those imprimaturs on our process, not our own teaching or claims about its efficacy or outcomes, assure graduate schools and employers that when we send them a student, that student will be excellent.

The difficulty that universities like Woodbury face in trying to achieve recognition for themselves and their students is not solved alone by outcomes assessments or by KPIs that indicate effectiveness. A simple example makes the case. With the majority of our first-time, full-time students in the five-year B.Arch. program, our four-year graduation rate will always be suppressed. And there is no way to repair the public damage of that anomaly unless the benchmark itself changes from “4-year graduation rate” to “on-time graduation rate.” Even that change would privilege universities whose populations did not include adult, working or other part-time and nontraditional groups. We can indicate our effectiveness by recourse to the National Education Trust’s College Results website, but that is not effective in making our case. HERI has developed an indicator of success in promoting persistence that measures a predicted outcome against the actual result. We are not yet ready in our data development to be able to use that indicator. But even when we can employ it, it will do no more than inform a very few external groups, like WASC, who take interest in such measures.

So as absolutely important it is to know our outcomes, Woodbury will not survive on that alone. It will only survive if it also answers the question of the external perception of its academic quality. Our challenge returns to the central question raised in the essay on the first standard: Does “Academic Quality” mean the quality of the university’s assets as a whole or the quality of the university’s graduates alone? While the validity of our existence depends on the latter and while the latter carries our brand and assures quality to those who employ or depend upon our educational effectiveness, the former assures the sustainability of any private university, especially of private non-sectarian universities that cannot, after all, depend upon value being imparted by a spiritual accreditor.

So our conclusion is two-fold: we must do all that we can to assure that our core operations are dependable in the production of quality graduates. That is, we must fully develop mechanisms to monitor quality and continuously sustain and, when possible, improve that quality. At the same time, we must develop those resources that announce quality to both those who may seek the university for an education and those who may seek our graduates. Finally, we must be careful to recognize that these two activities, while often aligned, are not necessarily so. The tension between them can create difficulties that the university must foresee and be prepared to meet.

So what has Woodbury done to assure quality? We claimed at the end of our last essay that “[t]he past seven years tell the story of Woodbury’s growing capacity to plan and of its greater and more coordinated efforts to analyze data for the sake of improving the educational [effectiveness] of

the institution at all levels: the student, the course, the curriculum, and the supportive infrastructures of finance, people, equipment and processes.”

To achieve that capacity, we have focused our identity more narrowly and in ways that state and celebrate our common differences. Claiming our identity in turn has allowed us to focus our efforts more narrowly and create synergies among programs and people where none had existed before. This alignment of identity has also allowed us to build on a tradition of bottom-up planning in order to become more purposeful and to share our common purpose in all aspects of the university. We have added an Institutional Researcher who also has expertise in assessment, and we have broadened and further institutionalized the gathering, analyzing and reporting of crucial data to support decision-making. These have been important aspects of encouraging a culture of evidence-based continuous improvement. As a result of the growing culture and capacity, we have successfully begun to unify and improve the assessment of the various structures of teaching, from classroom to curriculum, in order to effect significant learning.

Using our planning, we have made improvements in other aspects of the university’s infrastructure. We have strengthened our financial capacity. While the university remains largely dependent on tuition, we have been able to develop our endowment at a greater pace than forecasted, and against all expectations, we have rapidly concluded our first building initiative. It is noteworthy that the university also achieved its first commercial bond rating.

We have improved our human capacity in critical areas like faculty and university development, adding greater quality with greater numbers. The faculty, aspiring to improve and advance, has also made the assessment of their own performance and the performance of their colleagues more rigorous, and their achievements have also grown in number and quality. The university has a Board that is deeply engaged and extraordinarily competent. Woodbury also enjoys a president who has continued to lead Woodbury forward and who has attracted a coterie of able administrators to assist in the project. Most easily noted, however, of all infrastructure improvements is the physical plant, from the new buildings that will open in fall 2008 to the technology that fills our classrooms and studios.

The data points of the university’s achievements trend upward and portend future gains. The challenges that lie ahead, however, are not small, neither at the operational nor at the strategic level. Some cost nothing, except the time of the various members of the community, which is probably the most precious commodity that they have. Assuring that every unit has complete policies and procedures is a challenge for the university, since, besides requiring time, it requires another cultural change — the beginning of a culture of documentation. Unlike other requirements of a mature institution, this one holds little intellectual interest, even less excitement, and no sense of urgency. It will be simple, unrewarding trench work. But we know we need to do it. We have begun. And we will persist until we have completed. The greatest challenges, however, short-term and long-term, are listed below.

Challenge 1. Future Planning

Much of the future of the university depends on the successful completion and implementation of two plans now under construction: the Master Academic Plan, which should be finished, at least in draft form, by June 2008, and the adaptive re-use plan, which will allocate space based on the Master Academic Plan. Because the Master Academic Plan requires broad participation, because the process is iterative, and because the results must be digested and condensed, achieving a final document will be slow. Achieving that document, however, is the necessary first step to the next phase of our planning and goal-setting.

Challenge 2. Sustaining and Improving the Human Resource

As this report is being written a task force is studying a report of an outside consultant on the compensation and workload of full-time faculty, chairs, and adjuncts. Providing compensation and assigning workloads that allow the university to attract and retain the best faculty is of paramount importance. The resolution of some workload issues may depend on expanding full-time faculty beyond the ratio currently used to determine their number, while the resolution of others may depend on hiring staff who can support the faculty's work, such as a facility manager and additional technical experts. Clearly we will also need to make substantial improvements to adjunct salaries. While we will need to improve productivity to help finance some of this, we must do so without impinging on the quality of small classes and the individualized experience that we offer all students. Regardless of the specific recommendations that are made, the solutions will place a heavy additional financial burden on the institution, and additional planning will be necessary to support that burden.

In addition, we need to review the evaluation processes for all non-faculty below senior administration. Effective processes for periodic employee review need to be in place well before the WASC team's next visit.

Challenge 3. Assurance of Efficacy and of Learning

The university has embarked on creating an aligned and systematic process of outcomes assessment for academic and non-academic units. This project is well underway. The university has made a commitment to use the results of this process both for the improvement of learning and for the allocation of resources that can help make such improvements. Perhaps most important, this process has been enthusiastically embraced by faculty, administration, and board alike. We expect that by the time the team returns for the Educational Effectiveness Review, the system will be fully implemented and results will be available.

Challenge 4. Revision and Implementation of a New General Education Program

The work on the new general education program has begun as a result of the articulation of the six educational principles. The work is being done in a rigorous manner, scanning the literature and the environment from AAC&U's *Assessing General Education: A Questionnaire to Initiate Campus Conversation* to a review of the capstone projects in every major. The new curriculum will assume that general education is the business of the whole university, that faculty are models of the generally educated person, that the curriculum in majors should inculcate general education, that foundational courses must prepare students to use the principles of general education in their majors and in their lives, that places for remediation and consolidation must exist throughout the curriculum, that personal, academic, and professional development needs to be treated holistically, and that assessments must take place at regular intervals, setting a baseline at the beginning, allowing for remediation where necessary, and providing a summative assessment at the end that can be used to improve the curriculum. It is an ambitious project, but one that the community believes can be accomplished. One major challenge within this project will be finding a way to integrate transfer students successfully.

Challenge 5. Financial Resources

This aspect provides the greatest challenge for advancement. Woodbury is and will remain tuition-dependent. We have proven able to fill our classes and to exercise frugality, so that we not only live within our means but also invest in improvement. The prospect of reaching an endowment of \$20 million within the next three years looks very good. At that time, the university will be able to draw from that source an additional \$600,000 or more for operations each year. We have no doubt that we can continue to thrive in our market, and we also feel that our price position is very good, since it is

relatively low in the L.A. area compared to our private school competitors. Even with our price-sensitive clientele, we feel we can continue to raise tuition. Finally, we will launch a capital campaign that will be devoted to supporting, improving and expanding faculty, scholarships, and academic programming. All this will provide greater financial viability.

It is clear, however, that to reach some of the goals of improvement outlined above and to continue our quest for quality, the current forecast for financial resources may not be enough. Therefore we feel that we will need to develop a business plan for the next five years. For instance, we may need to diversify the demographic base of our students. We are currently adding international students, but we may have to add other full-pay students as well. We believe that our specialized accreditations and our location can draw such students, but to accommodate them would require changes in many services we now provide, especially housing. We also believe that if we are to attract these students, we will need to raise admission standards, requiring portfolios in architecture and design, for instance.

Any plan, however, will need to align with Woodbury's history, and no plan should alienate or drive away those students we take pride in currently serving, those whom our pursuit of excellence is meant to support, those for whom a Woodbury education is transformative. It will be a difficult task, but a rewarding one, to try to move Woodbury up market and yet maintain its roots and its soul, that which makes it meaningful to belong to the Woodbury community. When all is said and done, that will be the greatest challenge.

As we rehearsed these conclusions around the table of the president's weekly cabinet meeting, the members of the cabinet agreed that much needs to be done to assure that Woodbury fully meets its obligations, including those that flow from regional accreditation, and its promises. They also agreed that this was work they embraced. The community as a whole, from the Board of Trustees to the front-line service personnel, from the faculty to the students, is prepared to meet the challenges ahead, knowing that a great future is possible, a future that will continue to transform an institution that is making a difference and that we believe is capable of even greater achievements.