University of the Southwest Self-Study Report for the Higher Learning Commission

Submitted to the

Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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Introduction
Welcome from President Gary Dill

Dear Friend,

University of the Southwest is dedicated to being a Christ-centered educational community where students learn to become servant leaders by emphasizing faith, responsibility, and initiative in our curriculum and activities. Both on our campus through face-to-face learning experiences and through the variety of our internet-based programs, we are a vibrant, academic enterprise.

We are a community of faith that is not aligned with any particular denomination – our faculty and staff come from a wide variety of Christian traditions. Governed by an independent Board of Trustees, we are accredited through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. We participate actively in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. As a member of the Red River Athletic Council (RRAC) and the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), we embrace the “Champions of Character” core values of respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership, and sportsmanship. We welcome a diverse student body who represent a complementary diversity of race, religion, creed, and national origin.

We are confident that students receive more from us than just an education - they also develop life-long relationships and values that will help them succeed.

Welcome to the journey!

Gary A. Dill, Ph.D., President

TRANCENDANCE

Does the world need more people to be leaders...
or more leaders to be servants?

What will you become?
Self-Study Process

Preparation for the 2014 comprehensive visit began in the summer of 2012. Dr. James Smith, Provost, appointed Dr. Mary Harris, Dean of the School of Education and Associate Provost, as chair for the self-study process. Ms. Jordan Bodine, Dean of Enrollment Services & Student Success, was appointed co-chair for the self-study process. Jordan Bodine resigned her position with the University in 2012.

Selection of Criterion Chairpersons

Subsequent to Ms. Bodine’s departure, Dr. Harris selected Mrs. Tammie Baker to serve as the new co-chair for the committee. Mrs. Baker is the Director of Field Placement. In addition to the committee chair and co-chair, there were five committees developed for the self-study which were created according to each of the five criteria. Together, Dr. Smith and Dr. Harris selected the following campus leaders to chair the self-study criterion committees.

- Criterion One: Mission
  Criterion Chair: Mr. John McCance, Dean of Library Services

- Criterion Two: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
  Criterion Chair: Dr. Marianne Westbrook, Dean of the School for Arts and Sciences

- Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources, and Support
  Criterion Chair: Dr. Mary Harris, Dean of Education

- Criterion Four: Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement
  Criterion Chair: Dr. Ryan Tipton, Dean of School of Business and Professional Studies; Chief Technology Officer

- Criterion Five: Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
  Criterion Chair: Mrs. Rhonda Tyler, Associate Provost of Student Success and Community Engagement, ENACTUS Advisor, Administrative Faculty

The first Self-Study Steering Committee meeting was held in July of 2012. The initial meeting was set to discuss the process and to decide on committee members. Since then, the committee has met once a month in preparation for the reaffirmation process.

Members of each team were chosen by the committee chair. After the initial meeting a group email was sent to invite faculty and staff to participate on one of the five criterion committees. Those who did not volunteer for any specific committee were then invited to serve on a committee that could use an additional member. The majority of the committee members are faculty and staff. Other members of the committees include members of USW’s Board of Trustees and community partners. The board members and community partners were invited by the criterion committee chairs to serve in an advisory position.
Writing the Document

Each of the committee chairs organized and gave assignments to each of the committee members. In the fall of 2012, committee members (a) researched and located documents; (b) enlisted the help of other faculty and staff to collect and verify policies, procedures, and information that would relate to a specific core component; and (c) began writing a draft of each of the core components of the criterion. Each draft was then sent to the main writer, Sonya Petroski, for editing and organization. After editing the report, Mrs. Petroski sent a main draft to President Gary Dill, Provost James Smith, and Chair of the self-study Dean Mary Harris in August of 2013. Self-study evidence has been submitted to Mr. Josh Ford, System Administrator in Technology Services, who has created the online evidence room. Everyone involved in the self-study process is confident the visiting team will find the evidence presented to be an accurate representation of what they will find during their visit to our campus.

Brief History of the University of the Southwest

Located in Hobbs, New Mexico, the story of University of the Southwest is an inspiring one. It is a story of vision and dreams, faith and determination, work and wisdom. It encompasses countless numbers of hearts and hands who have joined together to build an institution that not only enriches human lives but also glorifies God. It is the story of one community’s belief in the future.

The story begins, so it is told, in the early half of the Twentieth Century when “a young man on horseback scaled the heights near Cloudcroft and climbed the Wofford fire lookout tower to gain a panoramic view of ‘The Land of Enchantment.’ In prayerful meditation atop the tower, the youth was inspired to beseech God to give him New Mexico for Christian Education.” Through the intervening years, we are told, “God made this young man ready to help answer his own prayer.” That young man was B. Clarence Evans, and he was destined to become the founder and first President of what was to eventually become University of the Southwest.

And so, after many prayers and dreams and plans, Clarence Evans finally saw his “college for Christian Education” become a reality. Hobbs Baptist College was chartered as a two-year junior college in 1956, and changed to New Mexico Baptist College when the school became a four-year college in 1958.

Within a few years, however, it became apparent that the college had grown beyond the original design, and the move to a larger, permanent location became a motivating force. By 1961, the present site north of Hobbs on the Lovingston highway was obtained.

In 1962, this fledgling institution expanded its vision. College of the Southwest was founded as an independent, non-denominational, four-year liberal arts college to serve the southeastern New Mexico and West Texas region, an approximately 21,000 square-mile service area.

In 2008, the Board of Trustees voted to change the name of College of the Southwest to University of the Southwest to better communicate the type of academic community into which
the institution was evolving. (Press Release)

Under the leadership of President Gary A. Dill, the University has begun the transformation and expansion from a commuter college of primarily non-traditional students to include a residential campus as well (USW History).

Since 1962, the University of the Southwest has been educating young minds, helping mold the next generation of leaders through Christ-centered values. University of the Southwest is an accredited member of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, one of the six regional agencies that evaluate educational institutions.

University of the Southwest currently offers 25 majors and several specialties in the undergraduate degree programs and two graduate degree programs.

The average student to faculty ratio is 15:1. USW has 12 student organizations including professional, academic honor, Christian ministry, and civic and cultural. The University also supports an intramural sports program where students, staff and faculty are welcome to participate. 59% of undergraduates live on-campus in residence halls. The athletic teams, Mustangs, participate in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA) – Division I. Athletic teams include: Baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and tennis.
Areas for Improvement

Response to 2007 Comprehensive Visit Concerns
RESPONSE TO THE 2007 HLC CONCERNS

In 2007, the HLC site team raised concerns regarding the College of the Southwest
- in a steep enrollment decline for five years
- retention was very poor
- current budget projected a deficit
- Office of Institutional Advancement was practically vacant
- Capital campaign was foundering.

The judgment of the visiting team was that the challenges College of the Southwest faced were so significant that its continued existence was at issue. The 2007 team response made suggestions organized into two categories: 1) steps the College should take just to survive and 2) steps the College should take to improve academic quality.

CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM

1. Steps for Survival

The team believed that College of the Southwest had reached the point where it could not continue to save its way out of the financial crisis. What is needed is growth in enrollment and in fundraising. College of the Southwest needs to address its fundamental problems in terms of attention to 1) Enrollment management, 2) Retention, and 3) Fundraising.

Enrollment Management

In response to the concerns raised by the site team in 2007, University of the Southwest began an effort to attract and retain students in a competitive higher education market. University of the Southwest was approved by the HLC in 2007 to offer advanced degree programs in the School of Education 100% online.

In an effort to increase enrollments in online programs, University of the Southwest engaged a strategic educational partner that understood USW’s mission as well as the needs of the university. USW selected Greenwood & Hall for enrollment management support, and enCircle Media for marketing.

The core service objectives include:
- Expand USW outreach and growth nationally
- Branding strategy that identifies USW strengths
- Reach aggressive enrollment goals through marketing/lead generation and qualification
- Build revenue and increase efficiencies
- Increase retention and successful learning outcomes
- Provide responsive support and attention for students
- Focus on the advancement of USW’s mission and core values
USW has experienced significant increases in enrollment. The fall of 2013 saw the largest enrollment in University history.  

Exhibit: USW Key Indicators  
Exhibit: 2013 IPEDS  
Exhibit: 2012 IPEDS

Retention

Upon admission to USW each student is assigned an academic advisor from the Office of the Registrar. The student remains under the supervision of this advisor until degree completion. The advisor builds a positive, encouraging relationship with each student.

Student Success is a required course for all first time freshman and transfer students with a GPA of 2.0 or lower and less than 40 earned credit hours. It is a one-hour, face-to-face course, which takes place during the first 8-weeks of the Fall term and assists in acclimating new students to our campus culture, introducing them to resources for student support, and informing them of the important role of Servant Leadership in the lives of our faculty, staff, and students. Combined, these efforts help the students before they get into academic trouble at University of the Southwest.

Located in the Scarborough Memorial Library is Student Success Services, designed to assist students in the achievement of their academic and career goals. Services provided for academic success include three courses dealing in the different levels of admission to USW; the first-time freshman, the continuing freshman, and the transfer student; group and individual tutoring and/or mentoring. Services are on an individual and small-group basis; offering academic success strategies. Cooperative special needs programs are also individualized but are initiated through the School of Education. Weekly study halls are available for all subjects, placing a strong focus on lower-level courses in mathematics and English.

Additionally, Student Success Services monitors the progress of students in every course at various intervals each semester. USW faculty are asked to identify those students who are: in academic jeopardy, excessively absent, and/or not participating. The Associate Provost of Student Success contacts struggling students on an individual basis to develop remediation plans to try to ensure academic success. These strategies include but are not limited to: tutoring, mentoring, counseling, study hall attendance, and more. If a FERPA agreement has been signed more extensive measures can and will be taken in order to maximize the greatest resource support for the struggling student.

Student Success Services provide career development aid to students as well. Offerings are: career exploration, career development planning and job search strategies. A physical job opportunity board is available to all students for both full-time and part-time employment. A virtual job board is under construction. Resume development/critique is offered through USW 2213-Freedom, Ethics and Free Enterprise, which is a mandatory institutional required course that includes interview tips and communication methods for entering and operating in a global society. Students are encouraged to take this course no later than their sophomore year. USW 4691 Senior Seminar is a one-credit course which polishes graduates job-seeking skills so they can successfully enter the workforce.
Fundraising

The USW Board of Trustees plays a significant, strategic role in addressing the fundraising needs of the university.

In 2008, Laurie Dean was named Director of Development Operations. The Development Office works each year with President Dill to achieve fundraising goals set forth by the Board of Trustees. The main fundraising activities include:

- Appeal letters to all previous donors at the beginning of the academic year (mailed in October of each year)
- End of calendar year solicitation, mailed at the beginning of December
- End of academic year appeal, mailed in April
- Our largest fundraiser each year is our annual Free Enterprise Dinner. This dinner is underwritten by grant funding from the Hatton W. Sumners Foundation and provides us with the opportunity to collect donations through sponsorships. These sponsorships range from $1,000 - $10,000.
- Scholarship donations are solicited annually from individuals and foundations, renewing each year. Scholarships are generally restricted or endowed. Examples are the URENO USA Scholarship, MS Doss Scholarship, Hatton W. Sumners Scholarship, Xcel Energy Scholarship, Zia Natural Gas Scholarship.
- The Lea County Charitable Foundation and the Andersen Foundation contribute yearly. Proper reporting and annual proposals are required for these foundations to continue their contributions.
- Proposals are regularly submitted to various foundations for campus projects and needs
- The silent phase of fundraising for capital needs on campus is currently underway

In addition to fundraising activities, the Development Office also maintains efforts to continue ongoing relationships with donors and alumni, through the following:

- Sending cards to donors and alumni for sympathy, birthdays, anniversaries, accomplishments
- Sending twice yearly newsletter highlighting alumni, donors and students
- Sending annual Christmas cards to donors
- Sending complimentary lecture tickets to donors
- Recognizing outstanding alumni at the annual Alumni Awards ceremony held during the annual Alumni Chapel Service. The Chapel services features an alumni as a guest speaker.
- Maintaining contact with donors and alumni through phone calls, emails, and personal visits.

2. Steps to Improve Academic Quality
The College will need to review three areas to assure academic quality in keeping with best practices in undergraduate education: 1) curriculum expectations and delivery systems, 2) faculty credentials and loads, and 3) assessment of student learning outcomes.

**Curriculum Expectations and Delivery Systems**

As a teaching university, USW is dedicated to continuous development as a quality institution of higher education, especially in the area of academic curriculum. In our pursuit of programmatic and instructional excellence, USW is constantly examining best practices and trends in education that will enhance the university’s efforts to graduate students of the highest caliber. In addition, university leadership is attentive to the needs and requests of its clientele, with a view of providing instructional delivery that accommodates those students.

Placement of reliable, experienced leadership in administrative positions and identification of faculty leaders in each school combined with a focus on curriculum and delivery development has provided USW the infrastructure and training needed to analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate quality courses both on campus and online. USW instituted this training for faculty and staff through the Technology Services Center with support from leadership in each of the schools and the Office of the Provost.

USW demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its programs through continuous review. USW uses ADDIE (analyze, design, develop, implement, evaluate) to review and improve the curriculum. All credit that is awarded, including what is accepted in transfer or awards for other forms of prior learning are reviewed as well. All academic courses, on campus and online, are now required to have a Blackboard component providing students opportunities for increased methods of learning while providing the ability to move away from reliance on a single text or project assessment. This component also provides students, who may be traveling, the ability to maintain their educational schedule anywhere and anytime Internet access is available.

An added part of all academic courses is the inclusion of servant leadership which enhances the mission of USW. Students learn the elements of servant leadership and are also provided opportunities and encouraged to practice servant leadership in the community and on campus. Not only students, but faculty and staff also have professional development sessions focusing on servant leadership.

Finally, a required 3-hour course for all USW students seeking a Bachelor’s degree is USW 2213 Freedom, Ethics, and Free Enterprise. The intent of this course is to relate to the three pillars of our USW Mission; Freedom with responsibility, Ethics with faith, and Free Enterprise with initiative. This course is taught as a multidisciplinary course.

**Faculty Credentials and Load**

The University, through our administration, ensures that the faculty in place provides effective quality programs and services. Our administration recognizes that following good practices in determining qualified faculty is vital for educational quality. USW continually seeks to recruit
and hire faculty based on the hallmarks and common expectations for faculty credentials that have emerged in the higher education community. We also recognize the importance of additional attributes such as tested experience and professional development in determining qualified faculty. The faculty at USW are appropriately credentialed and are encouraged and supported by the University to stay current in their disciplines. As holding appropriate credentials, 80% of the faculty are doctorally prepared and 20% received a master’s.

Faculty members at the undergraduate level are contracted to teach a minimum of twenty-four credit hours in each contracted academic year. In response to academic program needs, faculty members may be invited to accept “supplemental teaching assignments” (formerly known as overload contracts) of an additional twelve hours as a component of an annual teaching contract for a maximum of thirty-six hours. Faculty members have the discretion of accepting or rejecting “supplemental teaching assignments.” All “supplemental teaching assignments” will yield additional compensation. Undergraduate faculty members who wish to teach more than 36 hours during any contracted academic year will be compensated on an “overload contract.”

Faculty members at the graduate level are contracted to teach a minimum of eighteen credit hours in each contracted academic year. In response to academic program needs, faculty members may be invited to accept “supplemental teaching assignments” (formerly known as overload contracts) of an additional twelve hours as a component of an annual teaching contract for a maximum of thirty hours. Faculty members have the discretion of accepting or rejecting “supplemental teaching assignments.” All “supplemental teaching assignments” will yield additional compensation. Graduate faculty members who wish to teach more than 30 hours during any contracted academic year will be compensated on an “overload contract.”

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Based on the lengthy work of many university employees, the institutional Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) formalized and implemented the current Institution Academic Assessment System (IAAS), which allows candidates and faculty to assess student learning outcomes (SLOs). The IAAS has been used by all three academic Schools (Arts & Sciences, Business, and Education) since January of 2011.

All faculties provide university candidates with end-of-course assessment surveys (EOCAS) for all courses offered each term. The surveys are delivered through Blackboard 9.1, and candidates use an exclusive direct link to Survey Monkey that has been added to the appropriate course. This process is completed during the next to the last week of a term. Therefore, candidates can complete the EOCASs and be assured that their submitted survey will be secure, anonymous, and confidential. Faculty will have an EOCAS link for candidates to complete every term for every course that is offered. An example of the EOCAS can be seen in the binder for assessment protocols.

All university faculty and staff are invited to evaluate the EOCAs and make recommendations for improvement. Any recommendations are presented for consideration to all faculty members.

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during Faculty Council monthly meetings. Special Faculty Council meeting may be scheduled if there is a pressing need to make changes to the IAAS before the next council meeting is held. Any revisions to the IAAS are presented to faculty and administrative staff members in order for these members to approve or deny the proposed changes to the IAAS.

Exhibits: Assessment Report
Criterion One. Mission

The institution’s mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution’s operations.
Introduction

University of the Southwest is a Christ-centered educational community dedicated to developing men and women for a lifetime of servant leadership by emphasizing individual faith, responsibility, and initiative.

- Teaching at University of the Southwest adheres to belief in God, in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in the separation of church and state.
- University of the Southwest strives for excellence in academic curriculum, campus life programming, and student activities in a supportive educational community where freedom of thought and expression is honored, and the demonstration of faith in acts of service is encouraged;
- At University of the Southwest, students are instructed and mentored by a faculty and staff who demonstrate Christ-centered values and maintain an environment where students can live and work cooperatively, valuing the multiple cultures from which they come; and
- As a community of initiative, University of the Southwest challenges graduates to become enterprising members of our society contributing to the common good by advocating and participating in the productive commerce of free enterprise, the constitutional privilege of self-government, and the practical contributions of community service.

University of the Southwest’s operations are mission driven. Faculty and staff work diligently to insure that campus and community constituencies are made aware of the mission and that it is articulated publicly as evidenced in the following: publications, the University’s Website, campus posters, the lyrics of the University song, and electronic documents, such as the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. The mission is also found in many printed forms, including those forms and documents sent to prospective students from the Office of Enrollment; the academic schools of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Education; and other administrative or academic offices. The University mission impacts and influences all aspects of University operations, including (a) decisions made by the Board of Trustees, (b) faculty teaching and mentoring to students, (c) curriculum development, (d) fiscal and managerial planning, (e) policies and procedures, and other University operations.

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

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

In spring 2005 the Board of Trustees appointed a Mission Statement Committee (MSC) comprised of two trustees, one dean, one faculty member that served as a faculty representative, the dean of students that served as a staff representative, the President of the Student
Government Association that served as a student representative, and one member of the then College of the Southwest (CSW) Alumni Board that served as an alumni representative. The MSC members examined, discussed, and refocused the mission statement. The revised mission statement was approved by the Board (Exhibit: 1.A.1.a) on December 7, 2005, and presented by Dr. Dill to the CSW community on December 12, 2005.

By refocusing the mission statement, the Board and the MSC members sought to strengthen University of the Southwest’s distinctive Christian identity. The former Mission Statement had characterized the college as “grounded in Christian principles.” These positive principles included charity, generosity, forgiveness, which could be applied equally to groups that did not adopt a Christian viewpoint. In identifying University of the Southwest (USW) as Christ-centered, the refocused mission statement characterizes the University as an institution where a Christian viewpoint prevails. Yet, because it also believes in practicing Christian principles, the University seeks to maintain, “an environment where students can live and work cooperatively, valuing the multiple cultures from which they come” (Our Mission [pamphlet], p.2; Student Handbook, p. 5). In order to maintain and continually improve the campus environment for students, the Strategic Plan Actions Steps for 2013 through 2016 is organized around six major goals:

- Goal 1: Student Quality and Campus Climate;
- Goal 2: Academic Distinction;
- Goal 3: Personnel Considerations;
- Goal 4: Marketing;
- Goal 5: Facilities and Equipment; and
- Goal 6: Finances. (Exhibit: 1.A.1.b)

The Board, MSC members, faculty, and staff are committed to preparing students to embrace USW’s Mission Statement by becoming servant leaders, a concept consistent with Christ’s teaching that, “the greatest among you is the one who serves” (Holy Bible, Matthew 23:11). USW employees help prepare graduates to enter the work force and to demonstrate initiative and responsibility. USW graduates will have had many opportunities to become responsible initiates or servant leaders.

1. A.2: The institution’s academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

Campus life, academic programs, student activities, and support services are consistent with the USW mission. Students can participate in activities on campus that include but are not limited to the following:

- B.E.S.T. (Bilingual Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, Special Education, and TESOL): Education majors participate in B.E.S.T. through discussions, activities, and e-mail; (Exhibit: 1.A.2.a)
- Catholic Student Association
- Speech and Debate;
- ENACTUS (formerly S.I.F.E.); (Exhibit: 1.A.2.b)
- Student Government Association; and
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

All courses, face to face and online, include a focus of the Mission statement in all syllabi (Exhibit: 1.A.2.e). In addition, a faculty member in the School of Business has developed a video introduction for the Cost Accounting class, which includes a statement of the Mission orientation of the course.

ENACTUS has participated in getting the campus involved in community activities including Dress-a-Live-Doll in which students are encouraged to help give clothing to needy children; end of semester survival kits to help students study for finals; a pancake karaoke night; Christmas tree decorating during the Christmas season; Mr. Mustang pageant (talent show) and intramural sports such as dodge ball, volleyball, ping pong, and basketball. Student outreach in the community of Hobbs includes helping with the following organizations: MyPower, The American Red Cross, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Club, and Humphrey House.

Enrollment at the University cuts across many social and ethnic lines. The Registrar reports the following ethnic groups to be in attendance: Asian, African-American, Hispanic, Native American, Caucasian, and others (Exhibit: 1.A.2.d). In addition, the faculty has become more diverse (Exhibit: 1.A.2.e).

1. A.3: The planning and budgeting priorities of the University have the Mission in mind.

The University’s planning and budgeting priorities are in line with the principles of the USW Mission, as presented in prompt 1.A.1 and (Exhibit: 1.A.1.b). The University’s planning and budgeting priorities are also available in prompt 5.C.1 (page 99) in Criterion Five: Resources, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness.

Core Component 1.B: The Mission of the University of the Southwest is articulated publicly.

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

Numerous publications and the University’s Website help promote the Mission statement throughout the local community as well as to potential students, parents, and other constituencies. The Staff Handbook (Exhibit: 1.B.1.a) also includes Christ-centered priorities and expectations:

The faculty, staff, and students of University of the Southwest are governed by policies and procedures grounded in Biblical principles that reflect Christ-centered values. Students are instructed and mentored by a faculty and staff who demonstrate these values in their personal and professional lives. (p. 3)
Student actions often reflect Christ-centered values. For example, when students are willing to help others through helping others in the community or on campus, Christ-centered values are demonstrated. The University also encourages students to become servant leaders. Through the Servant Leadership scholarship program (Exhibit: 1.B.1.b) students are given the opportunity to better their community. Many of the athletic teams participate in this program.

The students, faculty, and staff also participate in their own servant leadership in a variety of ways. Some include:

- Participating in Crosswinds Operation Homefront - assisting in restoring homes to needy
- Participating in Disaster Training by the American Red Cross
- Judging local middle school Science Fair
- Judging local district spelling bees
- Member of Lea County Women’s Network - Scholarship recipients for the Spring semester at USW: Marisol Rameriz, Aniko Hostes, Diane Sepeda, Sonia Tovar, L'Deana Coffer, and Jennifer Esparza.
- Working with and donating to local organization MyPower
- Provide Internships at personal businesses
- Mentoring at-risk students at local high school
- Writing a column for the local newspaper
- Leaders in churches
- Sunday School teachers
- Holding Q&A seminars on the Constitution and Bill of Rights
- Discipleship committee member at local church
- Speaker at a conference in Denver, CO on the Declaration of Independence, Articles of the Confederation, Constitution, and Bill or Rights
- Staff working with students to complete on-campus tasks

The University sponsors many campus and community organizations and events through monetary donations and by providing volunteers to help organize and participate in the events:

- USW Saddle Up ‘N Cycle – Community event sponsored by USW; proceeds fund annual student ministry trips.
- Jack Maddox Distinguished Lecture Series – FREE community event hosted by USW that brings in nationally recognized speakers twice a year.
- Fall Mustang Test Drive & Spring Mustang Stampede and Test Drive – FREE college days events for high school students to come onto campus and participate in college prep programs, athletic events and other activities.
- Free Enterprise Dinner – Community event celebrating free enterprise in America by hosting a keynote speaker and honoring a community member with the Trustee of Free Enterprise Award.
- Homecoming – Annual event that involves alumni and students; pep rally, athletic events, Alumni Chapel service and presentation of Alumni Awards.
• Black History Month – Work with local organizations to bring speakers or other educational programs to the community, hosted by USW.
• Annual Ted McVay Roll for the Cure – Monetary sponsorship and USW staff/faculty/students ride in the event on team.
• Relay for Life – Monetary sponsorship and USW student/staff/faculty participate in the event (fundraising, organization).
• Hobbs Holiday Tournament – Monetary sponsorship and helping to provide volunteers for the event.
• Healthy Women’s Network Annual Banquet – Monetary sponsorship and USW students set up and tear down event.
• Hobbs Chamber of Commerce “Find it in Hobbs” Golf Tournament – Monetary sponsorship and donation of USW items for gift bags.
• Hobbs Chamber of Commerce/Jaycee Annual Banquet – Monetary sponsorship.
• Hobbs Jaycees “Dress a Live Doll” Annual Benefit – Monetary sponsorship, provide space for use by the Jaycees and provide volunteers to help organize and participate in event.
• St. Helena School – Monetary sponsorship for annual fundraising event; provide volunteers for fundraising events throughout the year; faculty member serves on St. Helena School Board of Directors.
• Hobbs Community Playhouse – Monetary sponsorship.
• Toys for Tots – Faculty/Staff/Students participate in annual toy drive for local children.
• Canned Food Drive – Faculty/Staff/Students participate in annual canned food drive for local food banks.
• CASA of Lea County Tour of Trees – Monetary sponsorship.
• Hobbs High School Senior Bash – Monetary sponsorship and donation of USW items for giveaways.
• Hobbs Chamber of Commerce – Members and volunteer Ambassadors attend ribbon-cuttings and help with Chamber related events.
• Lovington Chamber of Commerce – Members
• Eunice Chamber of Commerce – Members
• Seminole, TX Chamber of Commerce – Members
• Lea County Community Prayer Breakfast

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

The institution’s Mission Statement is current and permeates all aspects of the campus. For example, inherent in the teaching at the University of the Southwest is a statement of the Mission in each syllabus provided to students. Student Life programming reflects this emphasis as well. Other programming includes the Catholic Student Association, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and the weekly Chapel service (http://www.ustream.tv/channel/uswlive).
An example of one of the student activities is the “See You at the Pole” prayer event held in September. Other activities include Bible studies for men and women (Exhibit: 1.B.2.a); outreach opportunities for service within the community of Hobbs, including MyPower, Habitat for Humanity; the Boys and Girls Club; and local churches and youth groups.

Prominent in the makeup of the University are Free Enterprise courses within the Business curriculum. Indeed, the course entitled Freedom, Ethics, and Free Enterprise (Exhibit: 1.B.2.b) is required of majors across the University curriculum. The University of the Southwest is one of the few schools in the country requiring such a course. This course includes information about the constitutional privilege of self-government. Embedded in many of the curricula are practicum and internships designed to give the student real world experience in their field of study.

1. B.3: The Mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituencies of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

The Mission statement begins with the following: “University of the Southwest is a Christ-centered educational community dedicated to developing men and women for a lifetime of servant leadership by emphasizing individual faith, responsibility, and initiative.” The institution’s educational community is composed of students, faculty (full-time, affiliate, and adjunct), and staff who celebrate and promote the University’s Mission. For over 50 years, the Mission has identified, influenced, and guided the campus community (Exhibit: 1.B.3.a).

Campus life programming is described in the general information pamphlet Inspire to Change (Exhibit: 1.B.3.b). The pamphlet highlights the scholarships and organizations under the influence of the Mission Statement. Indeed bullet 3 of the Mission Statement highlights the care of the students on the campus.

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

1. C.1: The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.

University of the Southwest addresses its role in a multicultural society in many ways--through course offerings, campus activities, and multicultural celebrations, to name a few. Professors are urged to foster well-rounded educational experiences for students that are essential in a multicultural society. The relationship between the University’s Mission and diversity is demonstrated in the academic programs and courses offered by the three academic divisions: Arts and Sciences, Business and Professional Studies, and Education.

For example, in an English course (Exhibit: 1.C.1.a) offered by the School of Arts and Sciences, students write stories and poems about various multicultural experiences, such as the Civil Rights struggle described by Ralph Ellison and Alice Walker. Because of the diverse-student campus population, students in this English class can also write about their individual cultures.
and the diverse characteristics within their cultures. The students may also select and write about a servant leader within their culture. These kinds of activities align with the University’s mission and provide students with valuable opportunities to learn about, appreciate, and celebrate other cultures.

The School of Business offers a degree in Global Business Management. Part of this course includes content related to Global Marketing, Global Finance, Global Management, and Managing Diversity (Exhibit: 1.C.1.b).

The School of Education (SOE) offers a teaching field in Bilingual Education and an advanced program in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Courses offered in these content areas focus not only on students from Hispanic cultures but also on students from other cultures. There is also an education course (Exhibit: 1.C.1.c) on culturally diverse and special needs populations that all education majors are required to complete.

In September 2013, the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM-PED) sent a five-member Board of Examiners (BOE) to review licensure programs offered by the SOE. The SOE was evaluated according to six NCATE standards (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), which included a standard addressing diversity. In the 2003 BOE visit, the SOE did not initially meet Standard 4 for undergraduate programs. However, the SOE not only met the diversity standard in September 2013 but also met all six standards required by the NM-PED.

Students may participate in campus clubs and organizations (e.g., B.E.S.T., the Southwest Cultural Pride Club, Catholic Students Association, ENACTUS, etc.) that include and celebrate a multicultural perspective. The various organizations support and mentor students as they celebrate and showcase the rich diversity found on campus, in the community, across the country, and around the world. The students who join the campus clubs and organizations help represent the diverse cultures of Mexico, South America, Canada, Europe, Asia, Ukraine, and other areas.

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

The University student body reflects the tenants of cultural pluralism or multiculturalism. The faculty and staff are quite diverse and vary in ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. Students interact with faculty and staff from Asian, Hispanic, African-American, European, and many different American backgrounds. The on-campus student population is extremely diverse as well. Although the majority of the student population comes from the United States, international students from Europe, Australia, Central and South America, Pacific Islands, and other countries add to the diversity of the student population.

The University of the Southwest knows the people in which it serves and takes that knowledge into account for every decision made. For example, attention given to human diversity as demonstrated and reflected in the following areas:
• **Office of Special Services (OSS):** The Director of the OSS provides faculty with ways to modify/accommodate the learning environment and content so that all students have the opportunity to succeed in higher education.

• **Title IX:** Title IX applies to all aspects of University life for which federal funds are received, including funds for financial aid to students. USW demonstrates adherence to Title IX by offering athletic programs for both men and women.

• **Ethnic diversity:** The University serves minorities and recruits students who are diverse in race and/or ethnicity.

In addition, the institution has employment procedures that reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves. Systematic policies are in place, which reflect fair and uniform employment procedures. The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources facilitates the hiring process from the notification of a vacancy to the arrangements of a reception to welcome and introduce a new employment to other campus constituents ([Exhibit: 1.C.2.b: EEOC Hiring Procedures](#)).

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

The Mission statement reflects the institution’s commitment to the public good. For example, USW supports the demonstration of faith in acts of service and of practical contributions to the local and service-area community. USW provides a positive, Mission-driven education for both on-campus and online students (See Prompt 1. B.1). Directed by the Mission, students, faculty, and staff realize the importance of serving others, which is dramatically showcased in *Transcend*, a short video that was produced for student, faculty, and staff and public consumption describing the importance of Servant Leadership here at USW. After viewing the video, it is evident from students’ responses that they are inspired to make a difference and to serve others.

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

USW strives to provide the community with, not only an educational experience, but also with service to the local, regional, national, and international communities. Although the institution offers campus life and education for traditional students, the University’s online programs continue to grow. In 2007, the institution requested approval to offer 100% online delivery of the SOE’s graduate programs and the School of Business’s MBA, which the HLC approved and helped expand the sense of community.

The on-campus community is made up of students who are athletes, and many of the athletic teams participate in servant leadership projects for non-profit organizations as well as those in need. The volleyball team saw a need to help those affected by *Super Storm Sandy*. The team collected necessary household items to aid the victims and the donations were sent to a shelter in Brick, New Jersey. In addition to the items donated the team donated money to purchase toys, hair accessories, nail polish, Christmas ornaments, and many more items.
The volleyball team also helped the victims of the Joplin, Missouri, tornado by collecting Christmas ornaments and decorations. The volleyball team’s decorations and donations were shipped to Bring Christmas Home to Joplin (Exhibit: 1.D.1.a), which was the name of the effort started by a resident of Joplin for making Christmas a little brighter for those families who belongings were destroyed. Many members of the women’s soccer and volleyball teams also have participated in MyPower, a local non-profit organization that mentors to fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-grade girls in Hobbs and the surrounding area.

Community outreach has also been accomplished by ENACTUS (formerly SIFE). The ENACTUS students have had many projects that have impacted community agencies including participation in the USW homecoming parade, two voter registration events, and a debate between two candidates for Senate Seat 51. The team members were guests of Congressman Steve Pearce at the Republican Pig Roast. The team also sponsored Constitution Day on campus with guest speaker New Mexico Senator Leavell; assisted with the USW-sponsored Distinguished Lecture Series in the fall of 2012 and spring of 2013; assisted with the 16th Annual Community Prayer Breakfast and the Dress a Live Doll with the Hobbs Jaycees.

During Christmas the ENACTUS team collected over 1,500 canned food items which were donated to a local food bank. The team reached out from our local community to worldwide when they helped with the fund raiser for OneLoveWorldWide, which raised about $80,000 for water wells in Africa. (Exhibit: 1.D.1.b) In cooperation with local hotels in Hobbs, the ENACTUS team collected used soap, have plans to melt it to reform into soap bars, and then it will be shipped to a village in Ghana, Africa. Servant leadership is seen in academics, in class requirements, on campus, the community, and the world.

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

The primary responsibility of University of the Southwest is to educate students as guided by the Mission. USW is a not-for-profit institution (Exhibit: 1.D.2.a) and has no investors, no parent organization, and does not support any external interests. Donor relations and partnerships with professional organizations are facilitated to help support the education of the USW students. The Director of Development Operations and Public Relations works with donors.

The second principle in the University’s Mission statement underscores the focus of the institution’s educational responsibilities:

University of the Southwest strives for excellence in academic curriculum, campus life programming, and student activities in a supportive educational community where freedom of thought and expression is honored and the demonstration of faith in acts of service is encouraged. (2013-2014 Catalog, p. 8) (Exhibit: 1.D.2.a)
1. D.3: The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

The University of the Southwest engages with its external constituencies as evidenced by several opportunities it provides for the community. USW, alongside the local churches, sponsors the Community Prayer Breakfast every year in the fall. Another example is the Distinguished Lecture Series (Exhibit: 1.D.3.a), which brings in nationally known speakers such as retired General Colin Powell, quarterback for the Denver Broncos Peyton Manning, Captain Chesley B. (Sully) Sullenberger who heroically landed troubled US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River in 2009 saving the lives of the passengers, former First Lady Laura Bush, radio commentator Jim Lehrer, and author and inspirational speaker coach Tony Dungy.

The campus has allowed use of its facilities for external organizations such as local police Special Weapons and Tactics (S.W.A.T.) teams for training. It has helped sponsor the Saddle Up ‘n Cycle fund raiser for cancer, the Relay for Life for cancer, and the MyPower organization to help fifth and sixth grade school girls to empower them to successfully navigate the teen years by making good choices and avoiding many of the problems teens face.

USW has sent the campus ministry team on mission trips to cities to help homeless shelters and a variety of mission projects in urban and rural areas. Through the Servant Leadership student projects, the campus community is actively involved in providing services across Lea County (Refer to Prompt 1.B.1; Exhibit: 1.D.3.b).

Criterion 1 Strengths:
- The focus on and expansion of Servant Leadership
- Integration of the Mission into the many aspects of the University: faculty, staff, courses, students, documents, and branding
- Integration is accomplished on a daily basis through the lives of students, faculty, and staff
- Internal planning in courses designed, the Strategic Plan Action Steps, student activities, support services, the many servant leadership projects demonstrated, sponsoring of many community organizations and campus clubs, organizations all show integration of the Mission.

Criterion 1 Challenges
- How to assess Servant Leadership
- Determine ways to inform new and continuing students about Servant Leadership opportunities and how they can become servant leaders on campus and in the community
- Demonstration of the effect of the Mission in the lives of students, particularly alumnae
- Greater demonstration of the Mission in the lives of faculty, staff
- Impact of the Mission in the community of Hobbs, perhaps through evidenced supplied by its citizens.
Criterion 1 Self-Recommendations:

- Continue to explore ways of assessing the SLO of Servant Leadership (e.g., portfolio of servant leadership experience logs, reports, etc. that a student develops from his/her time of admittance to the University through the completion of the appropriate capstone course)
- Develop ways to ameliorate the Criterion 1 Challenges listed above.
Criterion Two. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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

USW’s financial integrity is assured through annual external audits by Johnson, Miller & Company. Independent auditors’ reports have been positive (Exhibit: 2.A.1: Independent Auditors’ Report—July 31, 2012). Detailed audit information is also available for review, and USW Consolidated Financial Statements can be made available on request. The changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years ending May 31, 2011, and May 31, 2013, ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Such external audits have consistently shown USW Financial Aid Policies adhere to the principles of good accounting practices. Excess financial aid monies are refunded to students. Staff maintains a high level of knowledge and commitment to professional ethics.

Academic integrity is fostered through the established policies and processes such as those found in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs, which are reviewed and updated annually. The catalogs contain information about Academic Probation and Academic Suspension. However, wording in the 2012 - 2013 catalogs was found to be vague. As a result, the Academic Probation and Suspension Committee was formed in spring 2013 to address this issue under the direction of the Registrar, and the policy was re-written for the 2013-2014 catalogs.

Expectations regarding the integrity of students, faculty, and staff are found in the Mission Statement and Honor Code (found within the Staff handbook), which underscore Personal Responsibility, Respect for Self, and Respect for Others. Clear, detailed, and well-publicized procedures for appropriate conduct and grievances covering sexual harassment or misconduct, discrimination, conflict resolution, and termination are publicized in the Faculty Handbook, Student Handbook, Undergraduate Catalog, Graduate Catalog and Staff Handbook.

Administrative and support staff are crucial to guarantee the effective and smooth-running operations of the University. In support of the University’s instructional mission, the staff makes every attempt to encourage and enhance student learning. Each spring, every employee of USW is evaluated according to the Statement of Ethical Standards, found on page 2 of which is included in the Staff Handbook. Administrative and support staff members recognize that their employment at University of the Southwest carries with it special responsibilities. It is understood that all staff members are “at will employees” and can be terminated at any time, for any reason. Failure of an employee to carry out special responsibilities related to personal conduct or work performance, or actions that are not in keeping with the mission of the University, can constitute grounds for termination.

Outside contributions and all donor gifts are documented with a system called Donor Perfect. Only the Director of Development and the Executive Assistant to the President have access to these documents, which helps provide confidentiality. All donor records are stored in a secure locked file cabinet.
Food service for the campus is outsourced to Great Western Dining (GWD). The cafeteria operates under strict guidelines that meet and exceed the New Mexico Department of Health guidelines and those of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). The cafeteria also daily prepares 200 plates of food year round for Meals on Wheels and Hobbs Senior Citizens. The cafeteria staff has worked with the ENACTUS team to open an after-hours “Snack Shack”, also providing food handling and certification for interested students.

The MBSDirect Bookstore has provided students with the required course textbooks. However, the number of students who purchase textbooks through the University’s online bookstore is low (i.e., approximately 16%). Many students either purchase lower-cost textbooks through other vendors, and unfortunately, it seems that some students do not purchase course texts.

Some challenges have arisen related to students purchasing and receiving their textbooks in a timely manner, which can negatively impact instruction and learning. Some students wait until close to the start of classes or even until the first week of classes to purchase textbooks through MBSDirect or some other source.

In an effort to help ameliorate textbook challenges like those previously mention, an initiative to embed low-cost e-textbooks in selected Blackboard courses. This initiative was a collaborative effort between the faculty and academic leadership, the purpose of which was to increase availability and access of textbooks from the first day of class. The e-texts are embedded in the Start Here section of each Blackboard course. Gradually, e-textbooks will be embedded in more courses, and this action has been communicated to students. The cost of an e-textbook is included with a student’s tuition charges.

Faculty Council

All information concerning the Faculty Council (Exhibit: 2.A.2) is addressed in The Faculty Handbook. The Faculty Council provides a forum for teaching and administrative faculty to discuss matters of importance to this group. They also discuss and vote on concerns presented to them by standing or ad hoc committees. The Faculty Council may pass resolutions on items they would like to initiate or change. These resolutions are then passed on to the Provost who will address the recommendation or directs it to the appropriate senior administrator. The recommendations of the Faculty Council are advisory only and are subject to modification or rejection at the discretion of the administration and/or Board of Trustees of the University of the Southwest.

The Faculty Council and its standing committees make decisions about academic policies that can have a major impact on working and learning experiences of students, faculty, and staff. Academic policy provides the principles for, general directions of, and/or priorities for the teaching and research responsibilities of the faculty. The Council also acts in an advisory capacity, tendering advice to the divisional leadership.

Some of the Council's specific responsibilities include approving or denying approval/support of new courses, new degree programs, and new program requirements, which have been reviewed
and approved by the Academic Program Review Committee (Exhibit: 2.A.3). However, these actions are subject to final approval or rejection by the senior administration. It should be noted that the Provost, who is the chief executive officer of the faculty, has authority over administrative or financial matters; the Faculty Council does not have that authority.

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

University of the Southwest offers five degrees in different program areas at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Degree plans are found in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and are also available online at www.usw.edu. A variety of methods are utilized to inform the public about the programs and faculty who teach them. Applicants are guided through the application process by Enrollment Services. Transfer credit is awarded and prior learning assessment is performed on a case-by-case basis.

Admission policies are clear, consistent, and communicated to the public. The Undergraduate and Graduate catalogs detail the University’s programs and their requirements. Degree plans, course descriptions, cost to students, a listing of faculty and staff, Board of Trustees, Accreditation, The USW Online MBA Program, and "About The School of Education", and other general information are published in the catalogs and USW Website. Digital links for the catalogs are found on the USW Website along with additional summarized information.

Currently, USW’s catalogs do not fully describe some of the additional costs involved in the online-only program. Items not described include the (a) necessary Internet speeds for viewing of multi-media presentations, (b) upload speeds needed for specific courses, and (c) other unique requirements for certain courses. This occasionally results in students having to purchase additional software or hardware after they discover their computer, tablet, or current home Internet connection will not suffice for their coursework and assignments. Additional details describing the technology needs of online students are sent out by USW recruiting teams and can also be found on the USW website.

Catalogs are revised annually by faculty and staff and can include policy, program, or other changes and updates. University catalogs are available on the USW website. Departmental program information is also updated annually in University catalogs, as needed.

Financial aid is an important aspect of funding for USW students. Information concerning monetary student aid can be found in the University of the Southwest Office of Financial Aid Policies & Procedures Manual (Exhibit: 2.B.1). However, there are no institutional need-based grants or scholarships available to students through financial aid.

The University has partnered with Virtual Education Software, inc. (VESi) to provide students with professional development opportunities. Students may earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or graduate credit for the courses offered.
VESi is a company that offers continuing education courses online or via CD-Rom. Created by top instructors at VESi, these courses are available for various types of credit including Continuing Education Units, Professional Learning Units (PLU), Professional Development Units (PDU), Clock Hours, Undergraduate credit, or Graduate credit (Exhibit: 2.B.2).

USW partnered with VESi to help provide students with additional online education courses that are convenient, relevant, and affordable: (a) convenient because these interactive courses provide expert instruction at a pace that fits a student’s schedule; (b) relevant to the significant educational and social issues in today’s schools, as well as to the requirements students need to meet for re-licensure or career advancement; and (c) affordable because VESi’s format provides high quality courses while prices are kept low.

To keep the community at large apprised of the University of the Southwest’s activities, the following venues are employed:
- Press releases to local media (newspaper, radio, television) about students, faculty/staff, events, alumni, etc.
- Bi-Yearly Newsletter (The Mustang) sent to alumni, donors, board, and posted on Website
- Email blasts to specific mailing groups regarding events, athletics, and general information
- Volunteers from USW attend community functions (prayer breakfast) to maintain networking contacts
- The USW Website and Athletic Website are regularly updated with news and information.
- Rotary Club, Lea County Women’s Network, Hobbs Jaycees, MyPower, and other community organizations – faculty/staff are encouraged to join organizations and attend meetings
- Chamber of Commerce functions – USW is a member of all local chambers.
- Brochures and other marketing materials are available at various locations throughout the community and at USW.
- Advertising (both paid advertising and public service announcements [PSAs]) with local media, national media, billboards, television, etc.
- Job fairs, college days, and recruiting trips; also in attendance--faculty members who are available to answer questions about specific majors (Exhibit: 2.B.3)
  All events placed on USW calendar and local community calendars (i.e., Hobbs Events)

Core Component 2.C: The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

The Board of Trustees is the official governing board of the University. The board consists of 26 positions and members serve a five year term with no limitation on consecutive terms. One student may attend the board meetings, typically the President of the student government. Board of Trustees meets quarterly in March, June, September, and December. (Board Minutes for 11-06-12 and Board Minutes for 12-04-12)
2. C.1: The governing board’s deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The following link provides information from the Governing Board’s Deliberations (Exhibit: 2.C.1.a) with regard to occurrences in which they preserve and enhance the institution. The Board’s vision is a continuance of recruiting strategies with Greenwood and Hall, which will enhance the University’s online master’s degree programs and undergraduate online programs. The minutes reflect a stand of providing the University with adequate resources and personnel to adhere to the mission statement of the University. The Board granted approval of using Savant (Exhibit: 2.C.1.b), which is an educational enterprise that works with institutions to enhance and package curriculum. Savant also uses advanced methods to develop curricular content and to deliver the curriculum with the iPad or similar tablet.

In addition to the governing board, the University of the Southwest Foundation is composed of nine-member board of directors who are elected every three years. There is no limit as to how many consecutive terms a member can serve. As a rule, students do not attend these meetings. The purpose of the Foundation is informed by the Foundation’s By-Laws (Exhibit 2.C.1.c), and the members of its board meets three times a year: January, April, and October.

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

The Board of Trustees holds regular meetings four times a year. The institution operates under Articles of Incorporation (Exhibit: 2.C.2.a), which outline the composition of the board, terms of board members, and how the board functions. A number of documents and policies assure that board members consider interests of the institution’s constituencies during its deliberations. A Public Disclosure Policy (Exhibit: 2.C.2.b) assures that documents such as IRS forms, governing documents, and annual audited financial statements are released to any party upon request.

Board members sign a Conflict of Interest Statement and Disclosure Statement, further assuring emphasis on the welfare of the University’s constituencies.

Policies and benefits have been approved by the board demonstrating reasonable interests for internal constituencies such as a Cafeteria Plan with Flexible Spending Arrangement Plan, and a Section 127 Employee Assistance Plan for tuition waiver. The 403(b) Retirement Plan was discontinued in 2013, and employees are now encouraged to pursue retirement planning independent of the University.

A Non-Discriminatory Policy found in the Staff Handbook governs the institution’s operations and states that USW is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate between employees based on race, age, disability, religion, color, sex, nation of origin, or any other category prohibited by local state or federal law.
The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) establishes freshman eligibility requirements, transfer eligibility requirements, and requirements for continued participation. Each semester the Registrar, along with the Athletic Director and the Faculty Athletic Representative, certify student-athletes who intend on representing the University in a sanctioned athletic event.

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

Each board member signs a Conflict of Interest form and updates it annually as a means of preserving the board’s independence from undue influence. A Statement of Responsibility (Exhibit: 2.C.3.a) is also signed by each Trustee, clearly outlining expectations for conduct of board members in the best interest of the institution. No instances of violation by board members were identified.

A policy on Gifts, Gratuities and Kickbacks (Exhibit: 2.C.3.b) is stated in the Staff Handbook, which protects the overall benefit of the University in the awarding of contracts by limiting, accepting, or giving gifts and gratuities.

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

The Board of Trustees elects the University President as the chief administrative officer and delegates to the President authority to conduct day-to-day operations of the institution according to the Bylaws of the University of the Southwest (Exhibit: 2.C.4.a).

Organizational Charts (Exhibit: 2.C.4.b) for the USW Administrative Team, Office of Provost, Campus Steward, and Intercollegiate Athletics show each department’s day-to-day structure. The President reports directly to the Board while senior administrators (Provost, Dean of Enrollment Services and Student Success, and the Vice President for Administrative Services/CFO) report directly to the President.

The faculty has oversight of academic matters including teaching, advising, and scholarship. The faculty establishes policies and regulations that govern matters of curriculum and academic standards. Faculty is responsible for the addition and delegation of courses and programs which affect requirements for admission and graduation. All faculty decisions are based upon the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) Guidelines (Exhibit: 2.C.4.c).

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

Small class sizes at USW allow professors to have closer and more frequent interactions with students. According to the annual report of the Bigfuture.com College Board survey, during the fall 2011 the USW undergraduate student/teacher ratio was 14:1. Currently, the student/teacher
ratio is 15:1. Class sizes for graduate online courses vary but usually range between 5 and 15 students per class. Beginning with the spring 2014 semester, some instructors are creating groups within the larger online classes. Using groups within online classes is being field tested in an effort to simulate students’ experiences that take place in smaller size, face-to-face classes.

Since the institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning, it is especially important for faculty to be well-prepared when presenting curricular topics that may be of a controversial, sensitive, or emotional nature. Although controversial or sensitive topics may be appropriate to include in a specific course, an instructor needs to anticipate that a particular topic may be offensive to some students and to present the topic in a manner consistent with the principles of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (Exhibit 2.D.1).

Regardless of students’ majors or minors, it is likely that they will take a course that may include topics that are sensitive, controversial, or of a delicate nature. For example, students might be register for a degree-required course, which could conflict with a students’ belief or principles. It is possible that some sensitive topics could be included in some of the following USW courses:
To help faculty and staff become more skilled at dealing with controversial situations or topics as well as other work-related responsibilities, they are given opportunities for professional development. For example, employees are permitted to sign up for one University course per semester at no cost through a **Tuition Waiver Benefit**. Interested individuals are afforded a range of **other benefits**, found in the **Human Resources** section of the **Faculty Handbook**, which states, “The University supports ongoing professional and personal development of its employees…” (**Faculty Handbook**, p. 21). Tuition reimbursements are available to faculty who are continuing their education while working on a terminal degree.

The pursuit of truth in teaching and learning is fostered through other University activities. For example, ENACTUS (formerly SIFE) is an international, non-profit organization that works with leaders in business and higher education to mobilize University students to make a difference in their communities while developing the skills to become socially responsible business leaders. (**Exhibit: 2.D.2**, **ENACTUS Document Package**) Students are encouraged to be involved in service activities and competitions. Numerous organizations allow students to build friendships while fostering truth in teaching and learning through professional organizations, academic honor organizations, performance organizations, Christian **ministry** organizations, and civic and cultural organizations including:

- **BEST** (Bilingual, Education, Special Education, TESOL)
- **TESOL** (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- **Alpha Chi Honor Society**
- **Pi Kappa Delta Debate Honor Society**
- **Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society**
- **CSA** (Catholic Student Association)
- **FCA** (Fellowship of Christian Athletes)
- **SGA** (Student Government Association)
- **SCPC** (Southwest Cultural Pride Club)

In concert with the University’s Mission Statement, there is a weekly Chapel service which hosts speakers from a variety of religious backgrounds. Participants enjoy rich exposure to differing Christian faith traditions through meditation, songs, and religious customs presented by each speaker. The Chapel Service is video recorded and can be accessed via the **USW YouTube Channel** (**Exhibit: 2.D.2**).

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

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

Consistent with the USW mission, the institution attends to being responsible in the discovery and application of knowledge. Personal integrity is expected of all members of the USW community as articulated in the **USW Mission Statement**. Faculty members follow the
American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Statement of Ethics. The University advocates advancing academic freedom and shared governance defining fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, and ensuring higher education’s contribution to the common good.

Faculty members have the primary responsibility of overseeing student work and evaluating student learning. Academic integrity (Exhibit: 2.E.1) is described in the Student Handbook, which details what is expected of the student including the disciplinary actions which may be taken if rules are violated. The University also provides learning assistance and support for students having difficulty in any course work. In addition to individual tutoring, the library staff assists students in their research (Exhibit: 2.E.2).

### 2. E.2: Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

Regardless of the major or minor, a significant number of courses require students to produce a research paper following the American Psychological Association (APA, 6th ed.) form and style guidelines. Guidance is provided by course instructors as well as library staff on how to (a) format a research paper, (b) cite the works of others appropriately, and (c) write in a style commensurate with course and APA expectations. Web links are also provided for students to use in accessing the most recent version of APA formats and other supports such as the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). However, with the increase in online courses, particularly at the graduate level, monitoring academic integrity has become more of a challenge. Therefore, several actions serve to help maintain the academic integrity of USW’s online programs and courses.

First, the University’s policy on plagiarism (Exhibit: 2.E.2.a.) is clearly stated on page 43 in The Student Handbook, in USW’s catalogs, and on all syllabi given to each student on the first day of classes. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that plagiarism will not be accepted by this institution. The policy delineates aspects such as Personal Responsibility, Respect for Self, and Respect for Others, which can also be found in the course catalogs.

Next, TurnItIn is a software tool used by faculty and students to help guard against student plagiarism. Information on plagiarism and Turnitin are described in each course syllabus a student receives. Faculty and students are provided training on how to utilize this tool, and students are encouraged to use it to be sure their work is their own and to revise their work as needed. While plagiarism can result in dismissal from the institution, most often it does not; instead, it is often used as a teaching/learning opportunity.

And beyond the explanations found in the Student Handbook and a Course Syllabus, students are also offered guidance through the USW Honors Board (Exhibit: 2.E.2.b). This board deals with a variety of rule infractions, including unethical use of information. The Honor Code is also available on the University’s Website.

### 2. E.3: The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.
Academic honesty and integrity is stressed throughout the Student Handbook. Academic Catalogs for Undergraduate and Graduate level students, and the Course Syllabus, USW strives to educate and instill these successful attributes in the institutional community. Disciplinary procedures existing for academic misconduct of students are outlined in The Student Handbook. Academic infractions are usually dealt with directly by the faculty member involved, but some are taken to the level of the Dean. If the situation is not resolved by the Dean of the department, the matter then goes to the Provost who will make any final decisions.

Each student signs a form, which is included in The Student Handbook, stating they have read and understand the rules for living and visiting in the residence halls, drugs and alcohol policies, and the appeals process (Exhibit: 2.E.3.a). Any violations of USW’s Honor Code of Conduct are directed to the USW Honors Board. The Dean of Student Life is responsible for overseeing the Honors Board decisions regarding student infractions.

As stated in the Responsible Network User Agreement (Exhibit: 2.E.3.b), which must be agreed to for users to gain access to the USW networks outside of limited guest privileges, Students are required to eschew the use of P2P file sharing, pornographic websites, gambling sites and sites selling alcoholic or tobacco products. Website filtering for primary networks is accomplished via a Sophos Web Security Appliance. This system has most website traffic redirected through it, allowing the system to evaluate websites based on Sophos’s extensive site categorization and security classification systems to both enforce USW Network use guidelines and provide a method for appeal should websites be classified incorrectly. These applications for site review are manually checked and verified by USW Technical Staff and are approved in the event that the site has been miscategorized or mislabeled. The majority of such requests, however, tend to be spurious.

In addition to the web filtering system, an IPS device scans all outgoing and incoming traffic and attempts to filter out banned traffic types. Due to the effectiveness of this system in the past, disciplinary action is rarely if ever needed. In only two cases were students finally banned from USW networks due to abusive practices, and they were both permitted back online once their systems had been verified to be clean.

Summary

This document outlines the University of the Southwest’s strategic planning effort, which focuses on ensuring that the Institution continues to be a viable instrument in the 21st century. The self-study thus considers the University’s accomplishments and effectiveness in relation to our strategic goals and objectives in the areas of teaching and learning and servant-leadership.

Looking forward, the University of the Southwest recognizes that the beginning of the new decade marks a significant transition for the institution. While being involved in major planning initiatives, including a viable strategic plan to carry us into the next decade, USW must also begin to articulate a new vision that carries the institution forward and provides a foundation for new ways to express the vision that every USW student will experience in an integrated Christ-centered educational institution.
CRITERION 2 STRENGTHS:

- Courses that focus on professionalism and ethics are required of all degree-completers.
- Faculty follow Codes of Ethics required for professional licensure.
- Monthly Servant Leadership Activities & Luncheons have brought attention to and helped faculty and staff learn more about servant leadership.
- The venue for Relationships 101, a learning and luncheon event that focuses on creating, maintaining, and improving professional relationships, which will benefit all groups on campus.

CRITERION 2 CHALLENGES:

- Some students are still registering for courses for which the pre-requisite course(s) have not been successfully completed.
- A lack of central vision for Arts and Sciences degree plans
- Need to grow the number of student in Arts and Sciences majors
- Vertical and horizontal alignment of all courses for all majors is not available.

CRITERION 2 SELF-RECOMMENDATIONS:

- During departmental meeting or in faculty council, faculty and staff must discuss and review course perquisites and updating these in CAMS. Students should not be able to self-register for a class with pre-requisites until he/she has successfully completed the pre-requisite course(s).
- Improve communication and continue collaborations between the Office of the Registrar and the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Business and Professional Studies, and Education.
- The SAS is working to create matrices wherein all courses for majors are vertically aligned to build on one another so that students and faculty can see an overall plan of growth tied to the program area learning objectives and the SLOs outlined by the University. Additionally, these detailed alignment matrices will be shared with all faculty members to promote horizontal alignment in student experiences within differing course sections, the goal of which is to provide a complete learning experience for all students in Arts and Sciences majors.
- Implementation of an Arts and Sciences exit interview for graduating seniors to identify concerns/challenges within programs; development of ultimate goal(s) to address issues/concerns/challenges in order to strengthen and improve the School of Arts & Sciences and the University.
Criterion Three. Teaching and Learning – Quality, Resources, and Support

The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.
Introduction

Central to the University’s identity is its focus on addressing the individual student's learning needs. The University provides a variety of learning experiences and settings, including traditional classrooms and approaches, independent studies, practica, internships, field experiences, collaborative research, service learning, online courses, classroom courses with online enhancements, distance learning, and integrated technology enrichment throughout the campus.

In 2007, the Higher Learning Commission approved USW’s request to offer the Master of Science in Education (MSE) degree as a 100% online graduate program. This program was to offer nine areas of specialization. Then in 2007, a fully online MBA program was approved and is offered through the School of Business and Professional Studies. As a result of offering online advanced degrees, the graduate program has seen a remarkable increase in graduate student enrollment, with approximately 60% of the student population completing their educational goals online. Currently, 437 graduate students are working on an MSE degree, and 116 graduate students are completing an MBA degree.

Reasonable faculty workloads and small class sizes at USW allow for an interactive learning environment. Ample opportunities exist for faculty to mentor students engaged in projects; to direct independent studies; and to supervise practica, internships, and field experiences. USW provides diverse learning environments through lectures, seminars, field experiences, work-study programs, and organizations with faculty advisors.

Formal academic advising is a requirement of all faculty members. A valuable aspect of the USW experience consistently noted by students in course assessments and exit surveys is faculty members' availability and willingness to meet with students outside established office hours. Many faculty members volunteer to help with career counseling and to write recommendation letters for scholarships, jobs, and graduate school. Such relationships between faculty and students exemplify the University’s mission and its commitment to its primary stakeholders: the students.

The quality of learning at USW depends on the interplay between students' commitment to learning and faculty's commitment to teaching. USW is a teaching institution. Among the faculty's many responsibilities, teaching comes first, followed by advising, service to the college, and scholarship, in accordance with the University’s mission. While teaching and advising are faculty's primary responsibilities, faculty are also responsible for establishing policy and adopting regulations related to curricula and academic standards.

USW's faculty takes the mission of providing a high quality learning experience very seriously. Each faculty member is required to be present for eight regularly scheduled office hours per week, and smaller class size allows close and frequent interaction with students. In addition, professional development funds are available to all faculty so they may procure memberships in professional organizations and attend professional meetings and conferences. Tuition
reimbursement and course load reductions are available to faculty completing terminal degrees also.

Provisions for professional development and other training activities for faculty help ensure a high-quality learning experience for students. The University also provides ongoing in-service training for faculty:

[This training] . . . includes, but is not limited to, such projects as the pre-session conference, divisional or school and interdivisional conferences, interclass visitation by instructors and administrative officers, class visitation by librarians, personal conference between new faculty and key administrators, personal conference between new faculty and academic leadership or the Provost, faculty meetings, attendance at professional meetings, computer training, and various lectures and seminars. (Faculty Handbook, p. 31)

The University of the Southwest provides Mission-centered, high quality undergraduate and graduate programs. Undergraduate programs are delivered in the traditional classrooms on campus, online, or through hybrid courses, which are face-to-face courses enhanced with Blackboard 9.1.

USW is committed to serving the needs of students who want the educational experience of attending a traditional, liberal arts University. Approximately 30% of the student population is residential. Additional campus-based computer services are being added each year, with accessibility extended to various parts of the campus to enhance residential life for on campus students. Continual upgrading of computer labs, as well as access to administrative information such as student services area and Scarborough Memorial Library has made advising and educational planning more user-friendly for students.

Continued expansion of delivery methods in technology services has been accomplished with a "student first" philosophy. Technology services continues to provide academic support for delivery methodology and training to give the online student the same high-quality learning experience of the traditional student.

The Provost, faculty, and staff study the various institutional needs and issues relevant to student and faculty growth, with the understanding that assessing student learning outcomes is the key to quality improvement for the overall university. While assessment processes have been ongoing at USW since 1989, major improvements and focus began in 2003. Along with improvements to the process of determining quality standards, both quantitative and qualitative assessments became the institution's main goal for the 2007-2014 academic years with major strengthening in 2011-2014. All three academic schools now have formal assessment plans designed to assess student learning outcomes and teaching effectiveness (Assessment Plans: School of Education, School of Arts and Sciences, and School of Business). Data acquired through assessment activities will continue to be analyzed with the goal of continuous improvement and maintaining a learner-friendly environment.

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

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

University of the Southwest develops specific degree plans for each program across all levels (undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, graduate, and post-master’s). The Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) (Exhibit: 3.A.1.a), which consists of academic deans and full-time faculty members, meets as needed to review changes and updates to programs and courses. As degree plans are developed and/or updated, they are made available to students. The University strives to keep the most current copy of degree plans available on the website (http://www.usw.edu/academics; see each School’s page for a list of current degree plans). Revision dates are typically listed at the bottom of each degree plan (Exhibit: 3.A.1.b).

The School of Arts and Sciences sets the following requirements for graduates of their programs pursuing a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences:

- Forty of the total number of hours must be upper division (Jr/Sr level) hours.
- Two-year college transfer students must complete 62 hours at USW.
- Students must have a 2.50 GPA in the major for graduation.
- Students must have a 2.00 cumulative GPA in order to graduate.
- Courses with grades below an “A” may need to be repeated to satisfy GPA and degree requirements (2012-2013 Undergraduate Academic Catalog, p. 50).

The School of Business sets the following requirements for graduates of their programs pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration:

- Forty of the total number of hours must be upper division (Jr/Sr level) hours.
- Two-year college transfer students must complete 62 hours at USW.
- A grade of “C” or better is required for all courses used to satisfy all degree requirements. Any course in which a “D” or an “F” if earned must be repeated. Courses with grades below an “A” may need to be repeated in order to satisfy GPA and degree requirements.
- Students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA in their emphasis area to graduate.
- Students must have a minimum overall 2.50 GPA to graduate (2012-2013 Undergraduate Academic Catalog, p. 54).

The School of Education sets the following requirements for graduates of their programs pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Education:

- Forty of the total number of hours must be upper division (Jr/Sr level) hours.
- Two-year college transfer students must complete 62 hours at USW.
- Education majors may only take pre-professional and teaching field courses prior to admission to the Teacher Education Program (TEP).
• Admission to the TEP requires the student to have completed the following:
  o Submit an application
  o Pass the Basic Skills part of the New Mexico Teacher Assessments (NMTA)
  o A cumulative GPA of 2.50 or better
• To be eligible for intern teaching, a student must have completed the following:
  o Pass the NMTA Content Knowledge test for their teaching field
  o Pass the NMTA Reading test (Elementary Education Majors Only)
  o A cumulative GPA of 2.50
  o A 3.00 GPA in education courses
  o A 3.00 GPA in the teaching field
• Intern Teachers must take the NMTA Teacher Competency test for their respective level before or during their semester of intern teaching.
• Intern teachers who pass all required parts of the NMTA will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree; however, students who complete intern teaching but have not passed all required parts of the NMTA will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts & Sciences in General Studies or a major field of study (2012-2013 Undergraduate Academic Catalog, p. 67-69).

For graduate students (including post-baccalaureate licensure students and post-master’s licensure students), there are certain expectations even before entering the graduate program. Admission to the graduate program is open to qualified applicants with a bachelor’s degree from a college or University accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting association and recognized by USW. Applicants for admission must have earned a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale as an undergraduate. Applicants who have earned less than a 3.0 cumulative GPA may be considered for conditional acceptance to a graduate program on an individual basis. Students seeking to pursue a post-master’s licensure program must also have completed a master’s degree from a regionally accredited college or University. USW seeks applicants for graduate students who are academically well-prepared, have shown dedication to their professions, and are highly motivated (2012-2013 Graduate Academic Catalog, p. 20-21).

Graduate students in both the Education and Business programs must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all graduate work completed. Graduate coursework taken at another college or University, in which a student earned below a B, will not be accepted in transfer to a USW graduate program. A student who received a C, D, or F in a course will be placed on academic probation. Furthermore, no more than one C will be allowed to count toward the Master’s degree/licensure program. Students who earn more than one C, D, or F will be allowed to continue in the program but must retake the appropriate course and earn a B or better at the first opportunity in order to remove a second C, D, or F. This can also help raise a low GPA. A USW Course may be repeated a maximum of two times (for a total of three opportunities to take the course) (2012-2013 Graduate Academic Catalog, p. 23).
3. A.2: The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

In order to demonstrate that student learning is of primary importance at USW, the University continues to enhance the current, effective, and comprehensive assessment system. This process was in place during the 2003 HLC review, with faculty approving clearly defined learning goals. It is the University’s intention that each graduate achieve these goals.

In 2007 (Exhibit: 3.A.2.a: Assessment Committee Timeline), both undergraduate and graduate learning became based on five student learning outcomes (SLOs):

- Communication – Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in both an oral and written format.
- Knowledge – Students will demonstrate a depth of knowledge and apply the methods of inquiry in a discipline of their choosing, and they will demonstrate a breadth of knowledge across their choice of varied disciplines.
- Critical Thinking – Students will demonstrate the ability to access and interpret information, respond and adapt to changing situations, make complex decisions, solve problems and evaluate actions.
- Academic & Professional Integrity – Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of the ethical standards of their academic discipline and/or profession.
- Service Learning – Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of skills necessary to serve others and their community in a diverse and changing world (2012-2013 Undergraduate Academic Catalog, p. 48, Graduate Course Syllabi)

All undergraduate and graduate students and courses are evaluated on these five criteria. Professors must indicate which criterion their course requirements address and students are evaluated at the end of each term on their successful mastery of the learning outcomes. An example of this is evidenced in course syllabi (Exhibit: 3.A.2.b) and SLO end-of-term assessments, utilized in the School of Education.

The School of Education’s (SOE’s) Goals

The School of Education (SOE) provides an instructional framework for all their students (undergraduate and graduate) and has set specific learning goals for students in addition to the University’s Student Learning Outcomes. In order to accomplish its primary purpose, the SOE established the following minimum goals:

- prepare students for New Mexico licensure in Elementary and/or Secondary Education, Special Education, Educational Administration, School Counseling, Mental Health Counseling, Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Diagnostics based on a shared vision and coherent academic program that is consistent with the University
mission and SOE Conceptual Framework:

- Why are we committed to the educational process?
- What do we need to know to be effective educators?
- How do we prepare for meaningful instruction/learning?
- What if we refine our work to more effectively meet the needs of our learners?

- prepare students to attain New Mexico endorsement in one or more of eight teaching fields
- ensure students' commitment to the education profession and the diverse populations served
- instill in students the motivation to provide community service
- prepare students to meet the demands of the real-world challenges of careers in education, including the use of educational technology to help all students learn
- ensure a high degree of knowing that emphasizes knowledge testing and application, and
- foster respect for and understanding of diversity, global perspectives, and international issues that support learning for all students (see SOE Conceptual Framework).

The SOE also established minimum objectives to give direction in the pursuit of goals. The objectives are directly related to the institutional goals and the required state mandated NCATE objectives. However, these objectives are not all-encompassing. Rather, they have been developed to serve as guides and planning tools for the SOE:

- ensure education candidates are screened for academic preparation, professional dispositions, and commitment to the education profession
- ensure requisite coursework, aligned with professional and state standards, is provided for licensure and endorsement attainment
- provide sufficient field experiences, practica, and internships to prepare
- ensure student participation in various school programs that represent diverse student populations, including levels of income, culture, religion, language, gender, and ethnicity
- include professional educators from area schools in the teacher preparation process
- require academic activities designed to increase students' knowledge bases, research experiences, and awareness of current educational issues
- model diverse teaching and learning strategies that actively engage students and reflect the natural learning cycle grounded in the research-based 4MAT System (McCarthy), and
- develop a student-centered attitude based upon a student-centered philosophy of education (University Self-Study Report, 2006).

The School of Business and Professional Studies' (SB-PS's) Goals

The School of Business has identified the following specific objectives for its majors:
• develop students who will take the initiative to act responsibly
• educate students to demonstrate preparedness to assume leadership roles
• incorporate opportunities for students to provide service to the community, and
• graduate students who are knowledgeable and skilled in their field of specialization (University Self-Study Report, 2007).

The School of Arts and Sciences' (SAS's) Goals

Each department within the School of Arts and Sciences has specific goals (Exhibit: 3.A.2.c); however, since the SAS provides the majority of classes required for general education, the overall goals of each department are closely tied to the institutional academic goals. The University’s success in fulfilling its mission integrates a learner-centered model of education.

The SAS provides undergraduates with a quality liberal arts education—distinguished by active student learning and discovery, intellectual breadth and depth, and the development of enduring skills—that prepares them to be successful and engaged citizens in an increasingly diverse, technological, and global society.

In addition, the School of Arts and Sciences has identified the following specific objectives for majors:

• Ensure a strong liberal arts foundation that provides breadth of knowledge and understanding of different modes of inquiry. Examples:
  o Support the freshman experience that provides students with a framework for understanding their education.
  o Ensure that the general education requirements support a rigorous education in the arts and sciences and the development of enduring critical thinking and communication skills.

• Identify and promote a student-centered and learning-centered model of undergraduate education. Examples:
  o Integrate active learning and discovery into the curriculum and pedagogy.
  o Provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to work together on creative and scholarly endeavors.

• Promote conscientious and responsible citizenship. Examples:
  o Prepare students to understand ethics and values in an increasingly complex society.
  o Support changes in the curriculum that enhances understanding of diversity in society (University Self-Study Report, 2006).

3. A.3: The institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations.

University of the Southwest offers its undergraduate and graduate coursework in a variety of forms, but strives to provide the same quality of teaching and learning in each arena. The University uses the research-based Quality Matters standards to ensure quality delivery in online
courses. Additionally, all faculty receive training on best practices (Exhibit: 3.A.3.a) for developing online classes so that our courses are uniform and student-friendly, as well as promoting the best learning opportunities for students.

For USW’s on-campus students, courses are offered in two formats:
- Hybrid Courses: The instructor and students meet at a given class time in the same classroom for traditional “face-to-face” instruction. All face-to-face classes also have an online component, in which instructors can post course materials and students may or may not submit assignments online, rather than in the classroom. Blackboard 9.1 is the primary online learning management system for these courses.
- Online Courses: The instructor posts all materials in the virtual classroom, and students submit all work digitally. Interaction with the instructor occurs either synchronously or asynchronously. There is no classroom component to this type of course. Blackboard 9.1 and V-Camp are the primary online learning management systems for these courses.

For graduate students, courses are delivered 100% online. The programs utilize Blackboard 9.1 (for Education programs) and V-Camp (an independent LMS for Business program). All online classes are expected to be delivered with the same quality and attention as a face-to-face course, but with the flexibility of online learning.

In 2001-2002, the University had a satellite campus in Carlsbad, New Mexico, but currently, there are no additional locations for face-to-face courses. However, the University does have a dual-credit program with the local high schools. According to the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Academic Catalog:

High school juniors and seniors, who have a 3.0 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale, upon written approval of their principal and approval of the University Registrar, may enroll for up to six (6) semester hours per semester for the fall and spring semesters only. Additional hours may be taken upon special request to the Provost. Transcripts from USW are available after high school graduation. A letter will be written to validate that the student has completed the course and the grade received in the class. In order to validate college credit, students must submit an official transcript to the Office of the Registrar after high school graduation. The first only University course is free; after that, tuition for the dual credit course will be 20% of the undergraduate tuition rate. The acceptance of home school students taking college courses for credit will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Provost. (Catalog, 2013-2014, p. 35)

The University also collaborates with a variety of outside educational partners to offer courses and continuing education opportunities. The University recently partnered with a Tennessee-based curriculum development and technology firm, Savant Learning Systems, to design and develop a revolutionary and innovative online MBA and Criminal Justice programs designed with the career professional in mind. The program combines cutting edge technology with a world-class curriculum to deliver a superior education to working professionals. The University began offering the Savant-based courses in October 2012, and Savant manages the V-Camp system utilized by the MBA and Criminal Justice programs. (Exhibit: 3.A.3.b).
Additionally, the University works with two partners to provide academic and non-academic continuing education courses for students and non-students alike. Virtual Education Software, Inc. provides continue education courses for teachers online or via CD-Rom, which can be taken for CEUs or graduate credit (http://www.virtualeduc.com/usw/). Similarly, Ed2Go provides non-academic and career training programs to enhance one’s personal and professional skills (http://www.ed2go.com/usw/). These courses are delivered online with instructors facilitating lessons, discussions, and other course materials. Both of these partners utilize their own instructors; USW faculty members do not facilitate these classes.

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

As evidenced in its mission and general education requirements, USW’s educational programs have been developed to help students to acquire a breadth of knowledge and skills in order to become productive citizens. General education goals and objectives provided to students are listed in the 2013 University Catalog and Student Handbook and student learning outcomes for each course are included in all master syllabi. The University programs engage students in all student learning outcomes leading to inquiry and analysis and a capacity to adapt to change.

3. B.1: The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.

The University’s general education program is inspired by the mission and is the foundation of the liberal arts programs and degrees offered to USW students. Faculty may teach and facilitate courses on campus, online, and with hybrid classes. The University employs about 60 faculty (i.e., full-time and adjunct faculty). The Institution maintains requirements for general education for its undergraduate programs through a curricula of between 30 and 51 credit hours, depending on the degree plans. Institutional requirements (9 credit hours), major, minor, or elective credit hours are not included in the general education credit hour requirements.

Students in the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) who seek the Bachelor of Arts and Sciences (BAS) degree are required to complete between 32 and 47 credit hours of general education curricula (Exhibit: 3.B.1.a). SAS students who earn the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree must complete between 30 and 39 credit hours of general education curricula. The BAS and BS general education curricula vary due to the specific requirements for the various major areas of study that are available. The School of Business and Professional Studies requires students to complete 41 credit hours of general education courses (Exhibit: 3.B.1.b).

General education courses range from 36 to 51 credit hours that students in the School of Education (SOE) are required to complete (Exhibit: 3.B.1.c). The degree plans for the SOE follow the New Mexico Public Education Department’s rules and regulations. During the September 2013 NM state visit, the SOE met all six state standards and received full approval.
(accreditation) for both undergraduate and graduate programs. The next state visit will be in 2020.

Grounded in the University mission, students have ample opportunity to construct their own knowledge, to become culturally competent, and to be exposed to a wide variety of concepts, perspectives, research, critical thinking, and servant leadership activities. Therefore, all undergraduate programs lead to a bachelor’s degree awarded by the University.

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

Several conceptual frameworks help guide the various baccalaureate programs. The University adheres to the ADDIE model when developing and evaluating the general education and other requirements for a bachelor’s degree. In 1998, the SOE developed and implemented a New Mexico state-approved conceptual framework. The framework’s slogan is Teaching and Leading the Way, which is influenced by McCarthy’s (1996) 4MAT organizational planning model and by six guiding principles: meaning, knowing, practice, transfer, reflection, and action.

During the 2013 fall semester, the SAS faculty and leadership developed the SAS conceptual framework to help structure and guide SAS program development, evaluation, and improvement. Currently, the SB/PS division has the University’s ADDIE model available to help guide their programs, including the general education program.

The University and division conceptual frameworks also help provide a systematic way for the University to provide a quality, liberal education to students through curricular and co-curricular experiences. These student experiences begin from the freshman year and continue through the senior year:

- Servant leadership opportunities and scholarships (Exhibit: 3.B.2.a)
- Student Success
- ENACTUS
- Capstone courses
- Writing and Math labs

Grounded in its mission and the SLO’s, the University encourages students to engage in critical thinking where freedom of thought and expression is honored. All students complete a senior capstone course that is appropriate to their major. A student’s capstone experience entails a formal presentation demonstrating the attainment of the SLO’s (i.e., proficiencies/competencies expected of graduates of USW). (Exhibit: 3.B.2.b: Capstone course; Intern Teaching)
3. B.3: Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

University of the Southwest seeks to provide experiences that assist in the development of the intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual objectives (Exhibit: 3.B.3.a). Through the University’s various educational offerings and degrees awarded (Exhibit: 3.B.3.b), students collect, analyze, and communicate information through critical inquiry, reflection, action, and creativity. Through these experiences students can develop the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective citizen in diverse and ever-changing environments.

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

The University embraces the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work. Therefore, human and cultural diversity is embodied in the education, degrees, and experiences offered. Beginning with the mission, USW students experience “freedom of thought and expression,” and learn to “live and work cooperatively, valuing the multiple cultures from which they come.” Furthermore, graduates are expected to “become enterprising members of our society contributing to the common good…” (2013-2014 Catalog, p. 16).

Since USW has long attracted students from diverse groups (Exhibit: 3.B.4.a) and has recognized that there are many kinds of diversity. Within a broad definition of diversity, the University serves students from a variety of cultural, denominational, and educational backgrounds. Diverse students who demonstrate different levels of abilities are also served through the Office of Special Services, which can facilitate the development of appropriate accommodations (Exhibit: 3.B.4.b) for qualified and eligible students with disabilities.

The 2012 census data indicates that the majority population of New Mexico is Hispanic (47%), followed by other minority populations: Caucasian (39.8%), Native American (10.2%), African-Americans (2.4%), and other minorities completing the state’s population (NM Demographics). USW is located in Lea County, a unique multicultural region of the state. The following figure indicates this uniqueness, which is similar to New Mexico demographics:
International students from at least a dozen countries have been recruited to the University and help enhance the diversity on campus. Since the last HLC visit, the majority population has changed from Caucasian to Hispanic, and the University has increased the populations of all culturally diverse groups.

To help support the curricular needs of the diverse student population, a variety of undergraduate and graduate coursework is included in each degree program. For example, USW offers Elementary and Intermediate Spanish, Spanish Comparative Linguistics, Spanish Grammar and Composition, Survey of Spanish Literature, and survey of Spanish-American Literature. Furthermore, the SOE offers different teaching endorsements with the secondary, elementary, and special education programs. Specific required SOE courses, which are approved by the NMPED for education majors, include Introduction to Special Education and Multicultural Learners and Literacy. A Bilingual endorsement also includes the course Race and Ethnic Relations.

The University offers several undergraduate and graduate programs that focus on issues of human and cultural diversity (i.e., Bilingual, TESOL, Psychology, and Special Education). Students may also acquire a minor or teaching field in Spanish. However, topics and issues related to diversity are included in the studies of the social sciences, general sciences, literature, writing, and other content areas. USW’s diverse groups of students, staff, and faculty provide ample opportunities for all constituencies to acquire a better understanding of, respect for, and appreciation of diversity.

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

Because USW is a teaching University, its primary goal is to promote the sharing, acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge with a wide variety of persons of all ages and
backgrounds. As has been made apparent throughout this Self-Study Report, in recent years USW has experienced many changes and in the process devoted much energy to planning, budgetary, and personnel matters. The University continues to promote a life of learning for faculty, administration, staff, and students in ways consistent with its mission.

The University fosters inquiry by supplying internal constituents with the tools necessary to continue formal and informal education. For example, USW provides easy access to Internet resources and an excellent campus library linked with the Estacado Library Information Network (ELIN), a region-wide consortium of libraries. Faculty and staff also attend regular in-service presentations that address issues related to teaching and mentoring. In addition, the University offers tuition assistance for faculty and their family members who wish to take courses at the institution and provides tuition supplements to faculty members who pursue terminal degrees. The University also makes funds available to faculty members who wish to attend professional development conferences and seminars.

In addition to promoting a life of learning for its internal constituents, USW promotes learning for the wider community by providing both formal and informal educational opportunities. For example, members of the community may attend special short-term seminars geared to important community interests and special lectures. In addition, professional development, CEUs or University credit can be acquired through VESI courses.

Furthermore, the University promotes a life of learning by recognizing publicly the achievements of its students. For example, the school provides academic scholarships, grants, and loans to deserving students; supports chapters of honors organizations; nominates outstanding students for honors such as Who's Who Among America's College Students and for National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA) awards; and ensures that the accomplishments of exceptional students are recognized in the local newspaper, at an annual awards convocation for outstanding students held on campus, and at commencement exercises, which are open to the public.

USW encourages students to participate in creative activities as well. Students with literary talent are invited to compete in the annual J. L. Burke literary competition and to submit their work to the campus literary publication, Southwest Creations (Exhibit: 3.B.5.a.).

Members of the USW administration, staff, and faculty also bear in mind that the University’s mission is to promote learning within a "Christ-centered educational community dedicated to developing men and women for a lifetime of servant leadership by emphasizing individual faith, responsibility, and initiative" (Mission Statement). As described in greater detail in Criterion One: Mission, the University expresses the main tenets of its mission in its everyday functioning. To this end the institution encourages the expression of individual faith in a number of ways, including the following:

- by sponsoring Life Insight for Excellence (LIFE) on-campus chapel services
- by sponsoring Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- by employing a campus pastor
by requiring that each student complete six hours of religion courses
by offering a major and minor in Christian Studies, and
by streaming Chapel online.

USW encourages students, faculty, staff, and administrators to demonstrate individual responsibility and initiative. A number of requirements and documents attest to this fact, for example:

- The Honor Code, to which all students are expected to adhere (*2013-2014 Academic Catalog*, pp. 21-22);
- *Faculty Handbook* and *Staff Handbook*; and
- faculty and staff performance reviews and evaluations (*Exhibit: 3.B.5.b.*).

Particularly because USW is a growing University, it is important that each individual meet his or her obligations. When one person does a poor job or a superb job, the consequences are apparent. Faculty and staff are expected to perform as well as they can, and faculty members are expected to strive to provide excellence in curriculum and to mentor and guide students. Students in turn are expected to help create the kind of environment in which they and other students may thrive, academically, socially, and spiritually.

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

USW’s faculty, affiliate, and adjunct teaching faculty hold appropriate certification and/or degrees. Many faculty members have earned a terminal degree, some are in a doctoral program, and all others have a master’s degree and/or extensive experience in the appropriate fields.

Professional development is available, and tuition assistance is available for faculty pursuing degrees. An evaluation process helps assure effective instruction, high-quality programs, student services, and student satisfaction.

In addition to teaching responsibilities, faculty also are required to establish office hours each week to assist students. Students also have access to a variety of services including but not limited to the following: Scarborough Memorial Library, online research databases, the SOE’s Learning Resource Center, financial aid and business office personnel, advisors, student success personnel, counseling services, and free tutoring.

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

All full-time faculty with terminal degrees carry a 9-credit-hour teaching load per semester and maintain 8 office hours per week. In addition to the teaching load and office hours, full-time
faculty attend the weekly chapel services, participate in Faculty Council, and serve on various committees (Exhibit: 3.C.1.a.). Courses taught in excess of the required 9 credit-hours are counted as overload, and faculty are compensated. Faculty overloads are generally 3 credit-hours per term and do not exceed 6 credit-hours except in extenuating or unavoidable circumstances. Faculty who hold a master’s degree carry a 12-credit-hour teaching load per semester and maintain office hours and participate in chapel, faculty council, and committee service.

Affiliate faculty are considered full-time faculty who teach online or have served as instructor at USW for many years. Affiliate faculty with terminal degrees carry between 3- and 12-credit-hours teaching load per term. Adjunct faculty may teach one or two courses per term. Any affiliate or adjunct faculty who live within driving distance of the University are always invited to attend and participate in chapel, faculty council or departmental meetings, and other campus activities.

In advance of the three registration/enrollment times each year, the registrar and dean collaborate to develop the course offerings needed based on enrollment and student needs. Full-time faculty members are also consulted by and provide assistance to the registrar and dean.

USW faculty are reviewing the possibility of including non-resident qualified academics as members of the full-time faculty. The University’s adjunct faculty members also hold appropriate, required qualifications; demonstrate expertise in their content area; or have had extensive experience in their teaching area. All faculty employment is approved by the Provost and President with recommendations from the appropriate deans and search committee. All prospective faculty must submit documentation, which includes the online employment application, official transcripts, certificates, licensing, or other acceptable credentials that may be required. This information is submitted to the executive assistant to the Provost and is kept on file in the Office of the Provost and Human Resources Office. The faculty personnel files will be available for review in the HLC workroom or exhibit room (Exhibit: 3.C.1.b.).

Faculty members are fully involved with student assessment, include assessment criteria in each course syllabus, and indicate the institutional student learning outcomes associated with various course requirements (Exhibit: 3.C.1.c.). Assessment data are acquired each term from each course help faculty and administrators know the degree to which students are demonstrating measureable learning outcomes for a course. Faculty members also use the assessment data to drive continuous improvement of teaching and learning at the University whether it be on a course- or program-level. In addition, all students complete a capstone course during which the instructor assesses student learning.

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

Among the full-time faculty, 80% hold the terminal degree, and all others have earned a master’s degree (Exhibit: 3.C.2.a). Terminal degrees are held by XX% of affiliate faculty, and XX% of adjunct faculty have earned a doctoral degree (Exhibit: 3.C.2.b). Faculty (affiliate or adjunct) who do not have the appropriate credentials are hired only if an extraordinary circumstance or
emergency occurs and a course must be staffed or be cancelled. This type of hire would only be for a specific length of time (i.e., one term), and the dean or designee would mentor and/or monitor the emergency instructor. All faculty who are teaching in programs with credentialing requirements, such as SOE or the CJ program, have the required degrees, credentials, and/or licenses.

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

Faculty are evaluated regularly according to established institutional policies and procedures. Annual self-evaluations are completed and presented to the appropriate dean for review. At a time convenient for both the dean and faculty member, an individual conference is scheduled with each instructor to discuss the self-evaluation, including the instructor’s overall performance, strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation plan serves as a professional development plan. Paired with a subsequent meeting with the dean, the self-evaluation review process demonstrates how faculty, with support from the dean, can develop and plan goals and objectives in order to continually improve their teaching skills in order to have a positive effect on student learning.

In addition to the faculty self-evaluation process, students in all classes have the opportunity during the last week of a class to complete a course survey. When completing a survey, students assess not only the course, but also the instructor’s performance, facilities, services, and their own progress toward successfully meeting the student learning outcomes (SLOs). Students complete the online survey via Blackboard for each of their classes. The results and report are generated through Survey Monkey, and the deans’ administrative assistants collate the information and then submit it to Dr. Ryan Tipton to include in the institution-wide assessment database. Furthermore, each instructor and the appropriate dean receive the instructor’s aggregated results from the course survey, including comments submitted.

The faculty member then uses the data to make pedagogical, instructional, or curricular changes to drive continuous improvement. A summary of the faculty member’s reflections, goals, and comments are to be submitted to the dean during the annual review process. The self-evaluation form also includes a section that refers back to the progress of goal completion from the previous year, and this process is repeated annually.

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

The University’s Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM) includes guidelines for responsibilities assumed by the faculty. Some of the policies, as well as information about professional development of instructors, are also included in the Faculty Handbook. The qualifications of faculty hired are presented to the Provost and President who approves or denies employment. The Provost is also in consultation with the appropriate dean during the search/hiring process. Currently, the 17 full-time faculty have either a master’s degree or a doctoral degree related to their teaching assignment, two faculty (11.7%) have a master’s
degree, three (17.6%) faculty hold a master’s degree and are doctoral candidates, two (11.7%) hold master’s degrees and are due to earn their terminal degree in May 2014, and 10 (41%) have a doctorate.

The roles, responsibilities, and duties required of full-time faculty include teaching and non-teaching activities. For example, faculty obligations may include some or all of the following: teaching assigned courses, maintaining and submitting student grades each grading period, serving on University committees, supporting and attending student activities and events, developing and/or updating course syllabi, preparing assigned Blackboard online courses, and/or including a Blackboard component to classroom and hybrid courses. Course syllabi are submitted by faculty to the appropriate administrative assistant, who then relays the syllabi electronically to the executive assistant for the Provost.

Faculty may submit a form to the appropriate dean for financial support to participate in professional development. If the dean supports the faculty member’s request, the dean signs the form and delivers it to the Provost for final review (approval or denial of request). Although each department has a small amount budgeted for professional development, the bulk of professional development funds is requested from the office of the Provost. Faculty who have received funding for professional development may be asked to provide in-house professional development for faculty and staff, as appropriate.

3. C.5: Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Contractually, faculty are obligated to make themselves accessible to their students for a minimum of eight office hours each week. Office hours are posted outside office doors (Exhibit: 3.C.5.a.) and added to instructor pages on the USW web site. Office hours are also included in course syllabi, especially those for on-campus classes. When on-campus students are unable to meet during a faculty member’s posted office hours, students may make appointments with their instructors at times that are convenient to both student and instructor. E-mail, texting, and phone access also are available, and directories are provided on the University’s website (Exhibit: 3.C.5.b.).

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

Staff members who provide support services are, at minimum, high school graduates or have earned a GED. However, 65% of the hold a degree (or are working on a degree) as well as job-related proficiencies acquired from educational courses or previous training and experience. Free tutoring in mathematics and writing is available for students and is provided by an English instructor and a mathematics instructor. Tutoring in other major subject areas are available; students are able to contact course instructors or the Student Success Director to make the necessary arrangements. Occasionally, capable work-study students may be available for lead tutoring sessions.
Financial Aid Office staff have degrees and many years of experience. These staff members advise students regarding financial aid and have current knowledge of state and federal regulations relating to financial aid assistance (Exhibit: 3.C.6.a.).

Student academic advisement is handled by staff within the Registrar’s Office. Furthermore, deans, faculty, and staff in all academic areas, Office of Student Success, Office of Enrollment Management, and others may mentor and unofficially discuss academic options with students. Students may share the information with their advisor in the Registrar’s Office. All official advising is handled through the Registrar’s Office, and graduate advising is handled by the Director of Graduate Advisement. The academic advising personnel currently hold, or are working to complete, degrees that range from an associate to a master’s degree. Advisors assist students in registering for classes, transfer, tutoring referral, and retention.

Students who need counseling services may contact the campus minister and a systematic referral process can begin (Exhibit: 3.C.6.b.). Procedures and policies are also in place for mental health emergency situations, such as threatened or attempted suicide (Exhibit: 3.C.6.c.).

The Office of Special Services is located in FAS 123. The director assists students who have questions about receiving accommodations in the coursework. Students who qualify, work with the director to develop appropriate accommodations that may help the student succeed in class. (Exhibit: 3.C.6.d.). The director also has oversight and University compliance of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Exhibit: 3.C.6.e.). Learning resources follow ADA guidelines, and students may receive resources that can aid them in the successful completion of their studies, including readers, note-takers, and a distraction-free environment for testing.

Core Component 3.D: The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

3. D.1: The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Central to the University’s mission is the charge to provide students with a quality educational experience. Essentially, everyone employed by USW is responsible to serve students according to their needs. However, the President and Provost have oversight of student services, which include but are not limited to the following programs and support services:

- Title IX compliance
- Student activities
- Ministries and organizations
- Student Success Services
- General Services and Policies
- Educational Records
- Scarborough Memorial Library Services
- Financial Aid
The essential functions of the Office of Admissions and Recruitment include recruitment, enrollment, and retention efforts. Once students have been accepted for enrollment, they are assigned an advisor with either (a) the Registrar’s Office, who serves undergraduate students, or (b) with the Director of Online Graduate Advisement, who serves graduate students. Once assigned, the same advisor will assist a student until matriculation. The students’ advisor provides guidance when students register for classes, advice related to the students’ areas of study, and address their individual needs that may affect retention of the student and their ultimate graduation. Retention services also help students overcome challenges and to refer them to the campus resources that can assist them with financial aid, campus events, technology services, and other student services already described.

The Office of Special Services (OSS) helps to meet the needs of students with disabilities and provides services in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The director of the OSS can determine the student’s eligibility to receive special services and will collaborate with the student to develop appropriate accommodations to share with instructors, as necessary; to provide faculty and staff with professional development related to students with disabilities and special needs; and to meet with a student in order to suggest ways to study, take tests, approach instructors, and deal with the challenges and opportunities one can experience when attending the University.

Short-term counseling is also offered to all currently enrolled USW students free of charge. Appointments are made with one of USW’s on-campus counselors through the Office of Campus Ministry located in the Library. Clients are accepted for counseling who have the capacity to resolve their own problems with the assistance of a counselor. Primarily, person-centered and cognitive behavioral approaches are used. Clients requiring more than 4 counseling sessions will be referred to other specialized counseling services available in the surrounding area.

Even though USW is considered a small University, the leadership has continued to provide and invest in cutting edge technology that can provide faculty and students with the tools to help teach and learn more effectively. Computers, projectors, SMART boards, and other technologies are available in campus classrooms. Computer labs are located in the academic buildings in addition to the library and are easily accessible to on campus students. In addition to the computer labs, wireless zones on campus, including residence halls, provide students with Internet access.

The staff with Technology Services supports students, faculty, and staff with training, troubleshooting, and upkeep of all technologies. The dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies serves as the Chief Technology Officer has oversight of campus technology. Faculty who want to teach online must complete a self-paced training course (Exhibit: 3.D.1.a) before being given an online class to facilitate.

Students who enroll in online courses also receive the necessary instruction that can help them succeed in working with an online learning management system. Blackboard 9.1 is the system used to deliver the majority of online courses. Savant Learning Systems is the delivery service for students completing a Master of Business Administration degree and undergraduate Criminal
Justice degree. A tutorial on the USW website provides instructions on how to access both online courses and student e-mail, Mustang Mail. Faculty and student portals are also linked to the University’s website and provide students and faculty with tools needed for access and information. Through the portals, faculty and students may access online courses, e-mail, unofficial or advisor transcripts, and other components necessary for student success.

Teaching and learning are enhanced and facilitated by USW's support of and investment in technology, technology support, and technology training. The University’s library resources (e.g., book, periodicals, educational videos, and electronic databases) also aid instructional preparation and student learning and research. Basic equipment and tools are available in science laboratories, and library services and resources are current and accessible. Regardless of the program of study, the library provides students with materials necessary for academic success, for research, and for personal enjoyment. A wide variety of materials are available to faculty and students: books, periodicals, newspapers, educational videos, electronic databases, and reference materials. Any materials unavailable in the Scarborough Memorial Library (SML) may be accessed through interlibrary loan services. The SML’s dean and staff assist and connect students and faculty with materials and research methodologies in order to enhance the teaching and learning experience (Exhibit: 3.D.1.b).

Organized activities are an important part of the University experience. The following activities, organizations, special awards, and publications comprise an integral network of social interaction and communication at University of the Southwest, which balances and enhances the learning environment:

- Distinguished Lecture Series
- Athletics
- Alpha Chi National Honor Society
- B.E.S.T.
- Catholic Student Association
- Speech and Debate
- Student Government
- ENACTUS
- Sigma Tau Delta, Alpha Nu Chapter
- Special Awards
- Awards Presented at Graduation
- Student Success Services

Students can benefit greatly from participating in the co-curricular and extra-curricular activities on campus in that opportunities abound to develop friendships, establish a feeling of belonging, to practice servant leadership, and to demonstrate the mission, and to relax and enjoy interacting with others in University sanctioned activities and organizations. Faculty and staff volunteer as sponsors to the various activities and organizations, which provides a perfect opportunity to interact and build professional relationships with students.
The Financial Aid Office provides students with quality service to meet students’ financial aid needs. It is evident to financial aid staff that receiving financial assistance is essential for many students to reach their educational goals. The staff shares accurate information in a timely manner in order to help students make financial decisions for funding their education. The Financial Aid Office also monitors its students’ indebtedness, default rates, repayment of student loans, and acts upon the results as appropriate and required by law (Exhibit: 3.D.1.c). Financial aid advisors work with students to review and update their files and to inform students about financial aid eligibility, the obligations as a result of receiving financial aid, and their rights as student borrowers. Current information about financial aid opportunities and information regarding the application process can be found on the USW website.

University of the Southwest is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for candidates without regard to race, color, gender, disability or national origin. As an independent educational institution, the University reserves the right to deny admission to any applicant whose academic preparation, character, or personal conduct is determined to be inconsistent with the Mission and purposes of the University.

Students can apply for admission at the Office of Enrollment Management, or they may apply online. Staff with enrollment services guide students from pre-enrollment process through acceptance to the University. All inquiries regarding admittance to USW are addressed in a timely manner.

Once students are admitted to the University, the Registrar’s Office works with all students and assigns an advisor to each undergraduate student who will work with the student from admission through graduation. The registrar and students’ advisors maintain accurate student records that encompass degree planning, course completion, grades, and degree completion. Graduate students work with the Director of Online Graduate Enrollment in order to receive the same services undergraduate students receive from advisors with the registrar’s office.

Guided by the mission, USW’s leadership, faculty, and staff provide the support services that are essential for student learning and effective teaching. Students are given individual, personalized attention by every segment of the University, and the support services are designed to be flexible, appropriate, invitational, professional, and to provide for the needs of all students.

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

To be admitted, a first-time entering freshman must be a graduate of an accredited high school, must have completed an accredited home school program, or must have earned a GED from an accredited program. For admission, a student must (a) complete an application for admission, (b) submit official high school, college, and University transcripts, and (c) a copy of the high school diploma may be requested. First-time students who have taken placement exams, the ACT, or the SAT should also submit that information at the time of application for admission.
Upon review of a student’s grades on transcripts and/or the scores of any placement exams, if any academic deficiencies are noted, students are advised accordingly. For example, students who have low achievement in English or mathematics may be advised to take developmental courses before beginning degree-required courses. Although USW does not offer developmental courses, students are advised to consider enrolling for and completing developmental courses through a junior or community college (e.g., New Mexico Junior College) before registering for degree-required English and math classes. As previously noted, USW provides free tutoring.

High school juniors and seniors, who have a 3.0 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale, upon written approval of their principal and approval of the University Registrar, may enroll for up to six (6) semester hours (for dual credit) per semester for the fall and spring semesters only. Additional hours may be taken upon special request to the Provost. Transcripts from USW are available after high school graduation. A letter will be written to validate that the student has completed the course and the grade received in the class (Exhibit: 3.D.2.a.). In order to validate college credit, students must submit an official transcript to the Office of the Registrar after high school graduation. The first online University course is free, after that tuition for the Dual Credit will be 20% of the undergraduate tuition rate. The acceptance of Home School students taking college courses for credit will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Provost.

For Academic Merit I scholarship eligibility, any new degree-seeking student in a face-to-face program must submit official ACT or SAT scores. Students may take the ACT or SAT during the first semester of attendance. Official scores must be submitted to the Office of Enrollment Services to be considered for the student’s Academic Merit scholarship eligibility. An Academic Merit scholarship increase will not be effective until the next semester of attendance. The highest score on ACT or SAT will be accepted for merit scholarships.

All international students coming to the United States to study are required to submit official English proficiency score reports to the Office of Admissions and Recruitment at USW. This can be in the form of one of the following:

- ACT English score of 19
- SAT score of at least a 910
- TOEFL score of 550 on the paper-based exam, a 213 on the computer-based exam or a 79 on the internet-based exam
- IELTS score of 6.0

Students who wish to enroll in online classes must first be admitted to the University under the same admission criteria established for all students. Students may submit the admission form online at www.usw.edu. An admission packet may also be mailed to prospective students upon request by calling 1-800-530-4400. Financial aid is available for students who meet the University’s eligibility requirements. Student advisement will be conducted with online students by email and/or telephone. A Degree Plan will be completed and delivered to the student and copies will be kept on file in the Office of the Registrar.

Student Success is a required course (Exhibit: 3.D.2.b.) for all First Time Freshman and Transfer Students with a GPA of 2.0 or lower and less than 40 earned credit hours. It is a one-hour, face-to-face course, which takes place during the first 8-weeks of the Fall term and will
assist in acclimating new students to our campus culture, introducing them to resources for student support, and informing them of the important role of Servant Leadership in the lives of our faculty, staff, and students. Combined, these attributes will facilitate their success at University of the Southwest.

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

After being admitted to USW, undergraduate students are assigned an advisor with the Registrar’s Office (Exhibit: 3.D.3.a.), and graduate students are advised by the Director of Online Graduate Enrollment (Exhibit: 3.D.3.b.). These will be the advisors with whom students work throughout their time at the University. Student advisors collaborate and communicate with faculty regarding specific degree requirements, licensure regulations for education majors, and other concerns regarding the classes students must complete. In the event a student’s advisor is unavailable, the student can communicate with another advisor. Even though students have a designated, primary advisor, they are encouraged to communicate with faculty concerning problems they may be encountering. Advisors, faculty, and staff can all encourage students to attend class and to seek help or tutoring as needed. Faculty are responsible for reporting any excessive lack of participation of students to the primary advisors and registrar. If a student is an athlete, the student’s coach is also contacted for lack of participation.

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

Students receive instruction through traditional classrooms or online courses. Beginning with the 2013-2014 academic year, the University went to a three semester academic year of 16 weeks each semester. The 16 week semesters run concurrently with two 8-week terms for online Blackboard courses (Exhibit: 3.D.4.a.).

In 2007, the Higher Learning Commission approved for USW to offer Master’s degrees that can be completed completely online through Blackboard or Savant Learning Systems. Faculty who teach online courses have had the appropriate training, will update an online course each term as needed, and communicate on a regular basis with students using Blackboard’s online communication tools or by phone, e-mail, ooVoo, and sometimes in person. Many online courses now include e-textbooks, which are embedded in the “Start Here” component of each course. With embedded e-texts, students do not have to find, order, and wait for textbooks to be delivered to them. Instead, students will have the e-text from the first day of early access to a course, which eliminates students starting a class without having a textbook or waiting on a textbook to arrive in a timely manner. A fee for each textbook is added to the tuition charged to the student (Exhibit: 3.D.4.b.). The fee for the embedded e-text is much less expensive for the student than books purchased through the online bookstore, MBS Direct, or through textbook publishers. Students have access to a course’s e-text for the duration of the class, but they may
print hard copies of all or parts of the e-text. The e-text allows students to search the book electronically for needed content.

In addition to the fully online course, all traditionally delivered classroom courses have been enhanced with a Blackboard component, and students may or may not have an embedded e-text. However, students are able to purchase their textbooks through the online bookstore. Classrooms have a variety of tools to enhance student learning and to facilitate instruction, including but not limited to projectors, computers, campus-wide Internet access, and appropriate equipment and tools in course laboratories (Exhibit: 3.D.4.c).

The Technology Services staff (TSS) provides faculty with in-depth training and support concerning online course development and management. The TSS also provides students with tutorials for becoming familiar with online course instruction and learning. The staff also provides technology support for students and faculty through the USW website and with personal phone and/or e-mail communications when necessary. Students have access to free wireless Internet access across campus so that residential students, commuting students, staff, and faculty can use personal devices such as laptops, iPads, and smart phones at anytime, anywhere on campus. The campus’s three computer labs are conveniently located in the academic buildings as well as in the library. The computer labs are available throughout the day and evenings, and students who have their own computers have Internet access on campus. Students who need tutoring but cannot come to campus-based tutoring sessions may also use the computer labs or their own computers to access online tutoring resources on the USW website or on the Internet.

The Scarborough Memorial Library (SML) offers open stacks, reading and study areas, a reference section, a computer lab, faculty and staff offices, a meeting room, a room with audiovisual capabilities, a large atrium for group activities, tutoring area, and The Thelma Webber Room, which houses books, memorabilia, and artifacts that showcase and honor the life of the Lea County ranch woman and special friend to the University. The SML has an online catalog and offers access to subscriptions of numerous electronic resources. The library maintains and manages the databases, search engines, videos, and other multi-media sources for faculty and students. These electronic research and learning tools are accessible to faculty and students online through the USW website, via faculty and student portals, or the library’s web page. The library keeps students, staff, and faculty apprised of current and newly purchased materials and resources that can facilitate research, course preparation, and student learning.

USW disseminates up-to-date information via the University’s website (http://www.usw.edu), the student and faculty portals, Mustang Mail (i.e., the campus e-mail system), e-alerts (i.e., e-mail, text, and phone), news releases, the campus newsletter, orientations, and other venues. The student and faculty portals are accessible on the USW website and are essential venue for disseminating information to students and faculty. Through the portal, students are able to view their accounts, access Mustang Mail, view financial aid information, check grades, and access Blackboard and many other electronic tools and services. The faculty portal allows faculty to access specific information and various tools, such as course offerings, course rosters,
Blackboard tutorials, University calendar, direct grade-submission, CAMS, Blackboard, Mustang Mail, and other tools and information similar to those that students access.

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

USW is an institution that focuses on teaching and student learning. However, in classrooms and online, faculty instruct and provide guidance in how to effectively use research skills and information sources and to conduct research in the Scarborough Memorial Library as required in some courses (Exhibit: 3.D.5.a). Students and faculty use the library’s technology to help facilitate the students’ research inquiries relative to course content. The library staff is readily available to assist students in finding helpful resources for any research projects required in their classes. In addition to books, periodicals, the library also provides database subscriptions (Exhibit: 3.D.5.b) that give faculty and students a large number of available research sources.

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

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

The educational experience of students at USW is enhanced by the institution’s co-curricular programs. The University offers a wide variety of clubs, organizations, and activities that align with its mission.

In addition to campus-based co-curricular programs, community and cultural events allow students to connect and extend their campus experiences to the larger community. Special community activities offered regularly include speakers, concerts, films, and other productions selected to emphasize the cultural, political, economic, and scientific heritage of America. For example, USW hosts the semi-annual Jack Maddox Distinguished Lecture Series. Nationally prominent presenters are invited to the campus to visit informally with students, faculty, and staff and give a formal presentation to the University and the public free of charge. Lecturers in this series have included Dave Barry, Lynn Swann, Oliver North, Ben Stein, Tony Dungy, Jo Frost, Dr. Robert Ballard, Laura Bush, and Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, Peyton Manning, and Dr. Jack Van Ens as “Thomas Jefferson.”

The Hatton W. Sumners Speaker Series sponsors an annual event aimed at fostering responsible citizenship in a free society. The series has hosted Dr. Robert E. Kelly, author of How to be a Star at Work, and Wal-Mart tycoon Jack Shewmaker. Other presenters include Christopher Gardner, author of The Pursuit of Happyness; award-winning educator, Erin Gruwell; actor, musician and author, Tom Sullivan; and American hero, Captain Scott O’Grady.

The University’s students can experience a heightened awareness, appreciation, and understanding of religious diversity through a number of venues. Such venues include but are not limited to the following experiences:
• Attendance at weekly chapel services, which invite ministers, youth directors, song leaders, and others to share diverse religions and messages (e.g., Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian, Judaism, Evangelical religions, Assembly religions, and others);
• Completion of the 6 credit hours of religion courses, which are institutional requirements for degrees earned at USW; and
• Invitations and transportation offered to students to attend services or to become members of area churches.

The University also helps sponsor a non-profit organization that helps to empower girls in grades five through eight and teaches them how to make better choices as they mature. This very successful and popular organization is named, MyPower. When MyPower was first organized in 2006, the University provided office and meeting rooms, at no cost, until MyPower found a permanent site more centrally located in Hobbs. USW also hosts the summer Quantum Learning Camps. MyPower plans and organizes the summer camps and contracts with and uses Quantum Learning instructors and curriculum. Girls who have participated in the MyPower groups attend the summer camp, and other girls in Lea County are invited to fill the remaining reservations for attending the camp. Several faculty members and some of the leadership have served on the MyPower board of directors (Exhibit: 3.E.1.a.) since the organization’s inception. This is just one example of the USW student co-curricular experiences that expands their awareness of diversity and complements their coursework.

To strengthen student awareness of global issues, students can join USW ENACTUS. This campus organization, is a member of the ENACTUS international organization, putting the Entrepreneurial mindset into ACTION USING a group of committed people in order to improve the quality of life and standard of living for others. Unlike any other servant leadership initiative, this group utilizes all majors and magnifies each individual’s strengths through projects and presentations; locally, regionally, and internationally. Hands-on leadership training allows students to acquaint themselves with business leaders on the local level through the Fortune 500 level. Yearly competitions allow students to tout their accomplishments and be rewarded for their successes (Exhibit: 3.E.1.b.).

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

At USW, the mission is the foundation of the students’ educational experiences. Students can conduct research, participate in community events, practice servant leadership, become aware of or develop a religious or spiritual purpose in their lives, and contribute to the economic development in the area. Students have opportunities to complete servant leadership and free enterprise projects and to become more active in the community, which help link their educational experiences to real world experiences (Exhibit: 3.E.2.a.).

As a community committed to Christ-centered thought, behavior, and relationships with others and with God, University of the Southwest provides opportunities for the spiritual growth of its students. One of the primary reasons students choose to come to USW is the spiritual atmosphere.
that is offered within the context of earning a University degree. Along with campus programming, students are encouraged to make personal choices that will reflect their desire to grow in their relationship with Christ. Students are also encouraged to consistently attend the church of their choice and support the ongoing ministry of that church. If students need help in setting up or organizing an effective devotional life the Campus Ministries Office is available for help and direction. The Campus Ministry Team is comprised of the Campus Minister and the leaders of each faith-based organization on campus. The Campus Ministry Team organizes, plans, and promotes spiritual life on campus throughout the year (Exhibit: 3.E.2.b).

Chapel is an integral part of community life at USW, the cornerstone of our distinctiveness, and a vital part of a Christian education. It can serve as a conduit for spiritual growth. Therefore, there are five objectives that the campus minister seeks in each session:

1. To provide a setting where God is worshipped enthusiastically.
2. To foster a sense of community among the campus family.
3. To expose students to the beauty of various expressions of faith within the Christian community.
4. To examine and address critical life issues from a biblical perspective.
5. To urge students, faculty, and staff to deepen their faith commitments.

Students who choose to attend chapel for academic credit may enroll in a one-credit-hour class for up to three semesters, fulfilling a portion of their required religious studies hours. Students will receive a Credit/No Credit grade based on attendance for chapel and the completion of assigned reflection papers.

Other spiritual life activities on campus include weekly Bible studies. All students are welcome to join these Bible studies. The Bible studies can be led by students, faculty, or staff and vary in topic. The location and time for the Bible studies can vary from session to session.

There are several opportunities for community outreach, service, and evangelism in the community of Hobbs. Among these are Big Brother & Big Sisters, Habitat for Humanity, local churches and youth groups, Boys and Girls Club, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. During orientation, USW students have the opportunity to learn about these and a variety of other service opportunities and organizations. Occasionally a mission trip is planned when classes are not in session. A mission trip can facilitate students’ involvement in changing the world.

The USW Student Government Association (SGA) consists of a Student Body President, Vice President of Spiritual Life, Vice President of Intramurals, Vice President of Campus Activities and Secretary/ Treasurer. The mission of SGA is to be a body of student leaders who serve the USW community through special events, campus improvements, student representation, and community service. SGA operates under a specific constitution devised and adopted by the students of USW. The SGA Office is located in the Student Services Suite in Scarborough Memorial Library.

Both men and women have the opportunity to participate in intramural athletics. Physical development is a part of the curricular and co-curricular programs of USW. Intramural sports
include basketball, softball, flag football, volleyball, racquetball, soccer and other games and activities.

The USW organization, ENACTUS, was originally called SIFE. SIFE stood for Students in Free Enterprise. ENACTUS is a national student organization composed of business and non-business majors who are involved in learning more about the free enterprise system, communicating its merits and value to the community, and becoming spokespersons for free enterprise.

Student athletes can become part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). FCA is the largest Christian sports organization in America and focuses on serving the community by equipping, empowering and encouraging people to make a difference for Christ.

The communities in Lea County provide a number of events for student participation and enjoyment which include music, drama, art, and theatre. The Lea County Event Center, the Lea County Commission for the Arts, the Western Heritage Museum and Cowboy Hall of Fame, and the Lea County Museum and Athletic Hall of Fame bring several additional cultural attractions to the community. Opportunities are available for selected students to be involved in or attend the theatre, symphony orchestra, and musical group performances in the community. There is a wide range of activities sponsored by SGA, the Student Life office, and other organizations on campus. Some of these activities include the Skate Night, Leadership Retreat, Athletic Awards, and various Homecoming activities. Additional features such as films, musical groups, and other events are also held throughout the year.

**Criterion 3 Strengths:**
- Interactive learning environment – Low student/teacher ratio
- Teacher availability – strong student relationships
- Diverse learning environments
- Providing a variety of learning experiences and settings
- Online graduate degrees
- Assessing student learning outcomes
- “Student – first” philosophy
- High quality graduate and undergraduate programs

**Criterion 3 Challenges:**
- Reaching out to all students in order to keep diversity on campus
- Funding available for Professional Development
- Ongoing technology updates
- Continued and increased support for online students to feel as if they are a part of the educational community

**Criterion 3 Self-Recommendations:**
- To be more proactive in recruiting and including diverse students in the educational experience
• To continue to seek the best technological resources to enhance the online learning experience
• To continue to engage online students and increase the sense of community in the online classroom
Criterion Four. Teaching and Learning – Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.
Introduction

Criterion four of the self-study demonstrates that University of the Southwest is committed to the continual evaluation and improvement of student learning as demonstrated through the assessment of student learning outcomes. Overall, the institution utilizes a robust system of measurement to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs via routine, systematic analytics techniques. Such analysis is subsequently translated into tangible actions steps to promote continuous improvement with regard to student learning.

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

4. A.1: The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

USW maintains a practice of regular program reviews through three campus groups: (a) the Institutional Academic Assessment System (IAAS) committee, (b) the Academic Program Review Committee process (APRC), and (c) the program reviews of the leadership and faculty of the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education. This triangulation of reviews helps USW to maintain quality programs by means of a systematic institutional assessment system (Exhibit: 4.A.1.a).

In addition to the University’s self-evaluation of programs, the institution also relies on feedback and recommendations provided by the Higher Learning Commission institutional reviews and program approval provided by the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) for the School of Education (SOE). The SOE’s last program review took place in September 2013, and the Teacher Preparation and Advanced Programs met all six standards during the recent NMPED/NCATE visit. Hence the SOE’s programs have been approved until the next NM state review which will be scheduled sometime in 2020 (Exhibit: 4.A.1.b). Although the Schools of Arts and Sciences and of Business are not, by definition, part of the SOE unit, the SOE’s review must also include data and information that relates to the educational teaching fields (i.e., minor areas of study), which are the purview of the other two Schools. So in effect, the NMPED has approved the SOE’s (the unit’s) program as well as the subject matter areas and general education courses, which are offered by the other two Schools. It is important to note that although the SOE at USW has not applied to be an NCATE affiliated or accredited school, the state of New Mexico uses NCATE standards to evaluate teacher education and advanced education programs.

One segment of the program review process is tied to the IAAS that measures student learning outcomes (SLOs) in every course every term. SLO’s assessment data are collected in two ways. First, during the last week of all courses, students self-assess their progress towards meeting the intended student learning outcomes; and second, faculty assess the students’ SLO’s demonstrated in the instructor’s classes. The faculty evaluate each student in their class on an individual basis. Eventually, the individual data forms aggregate data, which can be analyzed to provide (a) an institutional course and/or program overview, (b) course and/or program reviews for each of the...
three Schools, and (c) other more detailed analyses, such as an analysis of the correlation between student classification and SLO data.

Student self-assessment data are automatically tabulated through SurveyMonkey, and each School’s administrative assistant retrieves and saves the data. Subsequently, the student self-assessment data is forwarded to the Chair of the IAAS Committee who added the data to the institution’s assessment database. For the faculty assessment of their students’ SLOs, each faculty member enters the individual student ratings for each SLO into an SLO spreadsheet that is provided to them by the School’s administrative assistant. Once an SLO assessment spreadsheet for a course has been completed, the course instructor sends the spreadsheet data to the appropriate administrative assistant (Exhibit: 4.A.1.a). The data are then forwarded to the chair of the IAAS committee to add to the IAAS’s database. Data are analyzed by the IAAS committee, which includes the leadership from each of the three schools and from the administration. After analyzing the data, the findings are used to make improvements to a course or to a program (Exhibit: 4.A.1.b).

A second segment of the program review process is the work done by the Academic Program Review Committee. When a School’s faculty has used the data acquired in the End-of-Course Surveys for each course along with their own professional judgment, any significant change to a course in a particular program is discussed with the other faculty and leadership of the particular School. If the faculty and leadership of a School agree with the data analysis and the instructor’s professional judgment, a formal proposal is submitted to the APRC for a course change. Once a proposal has been approved, the proposal is then submitted for a formal faculty council vote.

The third segment of program review is done annually by each of the institution’s Schools (i.e., Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education). Through the use of triangulation of data and professional judgments, the program review process continues to provide a systematic process of using data to drive program (and course) improvement decisions.

4. A.2: The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.

USW’s Office of Enrollment Services (admissions) evaluates transcripts including what may be awarded for credit for prior learning. Enrollment Services forward their recommendations to the Registrar’s Office who reviews and accepts or rejects the proposed transfer of credits (Exhibit: 4.A.2.a). The registrar will place all transfer credits from the Council of Higher Education Accreditation colleges and universities on a student’s USW transcript. Because USW is in compliance with New Mexico Higher Education Department regulations, each transcript is considered an official document that reflects an accurate and complete record of a student’s academic career. In addition to regular credit-hours that are accepted in transfer, the registrar can also accept other types of alternative academic credit.

Students are responsible for providing official documentation (transcripts, certificates of completion, degrees, test scores) to the University Registrar for evaluation and consideration of applying such credits to the student’s USW transcript. Letter grades earned at other institutions
or in a non-collegiate setting, prior to enrollment at USW, are not used in calculating a student’s cumulative grade point average at USW and are given a grade of CR (credit).

Transfer credit. USW will consider transfer credits from other regionally accredited institutions; however, courses that are not consistent with USW’s curriculum and standards may not be accepted. An academic advisor evaluates completed coursework and makes recommendations to the registrar. Transfer credit requirements include the following:

- Only courses with a grade of D or better may transfer into USW
- Developmental Course credits earned at other institutions are not transferable
- 40 upper level hours must be completed at USW if a student transfers from a junior/community college
- 66 credit hours are the maximum number of transferable hours from an accredited junior/community college
- 87 credits are the maximum number of transferable hours from four-year accredited institutions or from a combination of a four-year accredited institution and a junior/community college
- A minimum of 30 hours must be completed at USW
- Credit earned more than 20 years prior to matriculation at USW will be subject to evaluation to determine acceptability

Credit by examination. Credit may be earned through tests administered by nationally recognized testing agencies such as CLEP or AP.

Assessed credit. Education achieved in a non-collegiate setting such as a military service or certain civilian employee training programs may be assessed for appropriate academic credit. The assessment is based on recommendations of organizations generally recognized as an authority by the higher education community. The American Council on Education (ACE) and the New Mexico Department of Public Safety are examples of such organizations. Some prior learning can be documented and accepted for credit by a student completing the following USW course:

USW 5903 Portfolio Assessment of Prior Learning (3 credit hours)
This course is designed to assist adult learners in assessing their experiential background and preparing a portfolio demonstrating their collegiate level knowledge.

(Exhibit: 4.A.2.b)
(Exhibit: 4.A.2.c).

Transcripts received from institutions not accredited by a regional association are not placed on USW’s transcripts; however, these transcripts may be evaluated for advanced standing purposes or prior learning credit when appropriate to students’ degrees.
4. A.3: The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

The Registrar’s Office has policies that assure the quality of the transfer credit (Exhibit: 4.A.3.a). For example, the credit hours from a 2-year associate’s degree from an accredited college are transferrable to USW. The University also has formal articulation agreements with a number of state (Exhibit: 4.A.3.b) and out-of-state colleges (Exhibit: 4.A.3.c).

4. A.4: The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

**Prerequisites for courses.** Once entry requirements are met, students must complete the degree-required prerequisite courses in order to progress to higher level courses listed on their degree plans. Various content area courses (e.g., English, mathematics, education) require the completion of prerequisite courses before students are allowed to take more rigorous courses (Exhibit: 4.A.4.a). This process provides the appropriate instructional support that helps students to progress from lower levels to higher levels of knowledge and skills through both social (e.g., course interactions between peers and instructors) and cognitive learning. Vygotsky’s Theory of Cognitive Development supports this type of scaffolding.

The figures below reflect a generalized analysis of the institutional assessment data relevant to the effectiveness of the course prerequisites at USW. Appropriately leveled courses would indicate a near zero correlation (no linear relationship) between the student overall course grade, as well as the total assessment score, and classification. As shown in the image, USW’s current prerequisite system is quite effective at achieving this result. Furthermore, after the analysis of the data was complete, the University’s Schools of Business, Arts and Sciences, and Education were able to make informed decisions to improve their respective programs (Exhibit: 4.A.4.b).

The School of Business has made minor adjustments to course prerequisites for the math intensive courses (Finance, Accounting, etc.). These changes provide a scaffolding approach for students in preparation for the courses that seem to be more challenging for them.
The School of Education’s NMPED-approved programs include appropriate pre-professional coursework and prerequisite courses for content areas as described in the course catalog. Despite the appropriateness of the SOE programs’ pre-professional and prerequisite courses, discussions between the SOE faculty and personnel in the Registrar’s office, including student academic advisors have made it apparent that students are not always taking the appropriate prerequisite courses before taking more advanced courses; it was determined that several factors could account for this:

- First, students may not be seeking the assistance of their academic advisor about the appropriateness of the courses they plan to take.
- Second, even if students worked with their advisor, they can still self-register for courses and may or may not decide to follow their advisor’s advice.
- And third, the self-registration system does not automatically block a student’s registration for a class even though a prerequisite has not been completed first.

In order to help ensure that students are completing the appropriate prerequisite course(s) before taking the next higher level course, the SOE will collaborate with the Registrar’s office before the end of the 2013-2014 academic year to find appropriate solutions to this problem. For example, Technology Services may be able to develop a program or rules that will not allow registration for a higher level course unless all prerequisites have been completed successfully (e.g., with a minimum grade of C).

**Rigor and expectations of student learning:** Following USW’s policies and procedures, each instructor must provide a syllabus for each course taught. The University’s instructors are revising course syllabi based on a template of minimum requirements that was designed and is used by faculty in all three Schools. However, each School customized the syllabi template as needed to meet any professional or pedagogical standards required of that particular School. For example, the SOE is required by the NMPED to include a section in each syllabus that indicates an alignment with the SOE’s Conceptual Framework. The use of a template to guide syllabus design and development adds value to a course by having a student-friendly, consistent format for a course’s syllabus. When there is more than one section of a course, which are facilitated by different instructors, each instructor uses the syllabus that has already been approved by the appropriate School (Exhibit: 4.A.4.c).

**Access to learning resources:** USW seeks ways to make use of all assets. One such asset is the investment in technology. USW Technology Services develops additional online instruction. Another way the University makes the best use of its resources is by partnering with organizations that will enhance services without negatively impacting the budget.

As discussed elsewhere in this document, USW’s Scarborough Memorial Library offers extensive electronic holdings accessible through the Estacado Library Information Network (E.L.I.N.), which is a consortium of area libraries, academic and public, throughout the entire county. In these holdings is a suite of 68 databases including Academic OneFile, InfoTrac Professional Collection, Legal Information Reference Center, Gale Group of about 50 databases, Opposing Viewpoints, and other databases for literature, business, education, poetry, criminal justice, history, and other subjects. Full text journal articles are available in many of
these databases. Students may access the E.L.I.N. from campus computer labs and their dormitories. They may also access the E.L.I.N. databases off campus provided they are currently registered with the E.L.I.N. consortium. For books not held by the Library and journal articles not available either electronically or within the Library, copies may be secured through the Library's Interlibrary Loan service.

The Library also provides additional online research databases that can be accessed through both the Student Portal and the Faculty Portal include the following:

- InfoTrac Custom Journals
- Poetry
- America’s News
- EBSCOhost Research Databases
- ProQuest
- American History Online
- Science Online

When students or faculty need assistance using the research databases, they can contact USW’s Director of Library Services, Mr. John McCance. Furthermore, for assistance with specific databases, faculty and students may use the technical support links provided by each of the resources listed above.

The Library workstations also offer Internet searching, and desktop applications Excel, Word, and PowerPoint. Full reference service and bibliographic instruction are available from the Library Staff to individuals and classes. The Library houses a computer classroom, a video conferencing classroom, a meeting room that can also be used for traditional on-campus classes, and an electronic resources training room. Offices are also available for faculty and staff, and there are many areas within the Library suitable for student study. The level of usage is monitored through monthly data reports accumulated from all seven E.L.I.N. libraries (Exhibit: 4.A.4.g).

The USW campus is a well-maintained, attractive, inviting, and growing campus. The current physical resources include the following sites:

- Jack & Mabel Maddox Student Life Center
- Thelma Linam Webber Hall (Athletic Department)
- J. L. Burke Administration Building
- Mabee Center for Teaching and Learning
- Bob and Adele Adams Hall (apartments)
- Mabee Physical Fitness Center
- Bill Daniels Campus Center
- Mabee Southwest Heritage Center
- Joan Tucker Center for Business and Free Enterprise
- Fadke Arts and Sciences Building
- Scarborough Memorial Library
- Residence Hall East
• Residence Hall West
• Residence Hall South
• Bob Moran Soccer Field
• Jake Williams Baseball Field

The addition of the Jack & Mabel Maddox Student Life Center has helped in the University’s efforts to attract and retain students. The Student Life Center includes the following:
• a concession area;
• a foyer;
• two classrooms;
• a weight and cardio training fitness room;
• athletic training and treatment rooms;
• a laundry facility;
• a full-service gymnasium seating 1000 spectators;
• a multipurpose room to serve as a prayer room until the chapel is constructed;
• a prayer room;
• an outdoor gathering area adjacent to the prayer room; and
• display cases for university awards.

The Jack & Mabel Maddox Student Life Center is providing students and other members of the campus community with venues for enjoyable activities, celebratory events, and serves as a tangible symbol relating directly to the University’s Mission, which reaffirms that USW is a Christ-centered education community.

In addition, the community surrounding the University remains a constant partner and resource for student learning and growth. Individuals and groups within the community participate in the life of USW by offering students jobs, supervising educator internships, and providing guest lecturers for a variety of courses. Noalmark Broadcasting corporation, who runs the local KZOR-KLEA-KLMA-KIX-KPZA-KYKK-KPER radio stations, hire graduates, as well as students still in school. Often these students remain in the station's employ until they have completed their degrees. Lea County school districts provide internships every year for intern teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and principals. Lea Regional Medical Center provide a counseling internship for a School of Education graduate student in mental health. The University maintains close connections with these enterprises through faculty internship supervision so that students and the enterprises may be matched according to students' career goals.

Facility qualifications for all programs: The evaluation of instructors process, IAAS (Exhibit: 4.A.4.d), has been evolving since the HLC accreditation visit in 2006. In 2011 after some significant changes in leadership, the IAAS became a focused campus-wide effort. The assessment systems of the campus Schools (Exhibit: 4.A.4.e) are aligned with the IAAS. As a result of efforts from all constituencies on campus, assessment has now become part of the culture at USW. With the improved campus-wide assessment systems, learning and effective teaching remain priorities and continue to improve based on data.
While tuition and other costs necessary to maintaining high academic standards have made increasing prices necessary, the overall cost of attending USW remains lower than that of other benchmarked institutions. Access to faculty, small class sizes, and a "family atmosphere" remain high on the list of USW's assets, according to students responding to exit surveys.

**Dual credit.** High school juniors and seniors, who have a 3.0 GPA or higher on a 4.0 scale, upon written approval of their principal and approval of the University Registrar, may enroll for up to six (6) semester hours per semester for the fall and spring semesters only. Additional hours may be taken upon special request to the Provost. Transcripts from USW are available after high school graduation. A letter will be written to validate that the student has completed the course and the grade received in the class. In order to validate college credit, students must submit an official transcript to the Office of the Registrar after high school graduation. The first online University course is free, after that tuition for the Dual Credit will be 20% of the undergraduate tuition rate.

The decision to accept Home Schooled students for Dual Credit college courses is made on a case-by-case basis by the Provost. Listed below are the admission procedures:

- Complete the application for admission
- Submit current official high school transcript
- Submit written approval from high school principal
- Submit written approval from parent or guardian

4. A.5: **The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

USW maintains specialized accreditation for the School of Education (SOE), which operates under the auspices of the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED). The SOE’s educator preparation program was reviewed in the fall of 2013 and successfully met all six NMPED/NCATE standards. Hence, the SOE has received approval for all educator preparation programs through the fall of 2020 (*Exhibit: 4.A.5.a.*).

Although the following entities are not specialized accreditation bodies, USW is a member of the following organizations:

- American Association of Presidents of Independent Colleges & Universities (AAPICU)
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities & Colleges (AGB)
- Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU)
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
- Council of Independent Colleges (CIC)
- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)
- National Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (NAICU)
- National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)
- New Mexico Independent College Fund (NMICF)
- Yes We Must Coalition (YWMC)
The Office of Enrollment Management conducts post-graduation and career surveys (PGCS). The surveys are sent out to students one year after they have graduated from USW. Enrollment management staff submit surveys at the end of each spring term to students who graduated the previous spring:

- Spring 2012 term to students who graduated during spring 2011 (Exhibit: 4.A.6.a.),
- Spring 2013 term for students who graduated during the spring 2012 term (Exhibit: 4.A.6.a.), and
- Spring 2014 term for students who graduated during the spring 2013 term (available summer 2014).

The 2012 surveys were sent to approximately 75 students with 10 students responding to the survey, at a response rate of 13%. Because of the low response rate, the findings may not be generalized to the entire graduate class of spring 2012. However, after analyzing the data from the surveys that were submitted, the resulting information can still prove useful as the University continues to demonstrate its commitment to providing students with quality education programs, invigorating learning environments, and personalizing support services. In order to maintain a culture and practice of continuous improvement, the University evaluates and assesses programs, the campus environment, support services.

The 2012 surveys indicated that the responding USW students were satisfied or completely satisfied with the (a) content of the course, (b) cost of tuition, (c) technology provided, and (d) course instructors. As to how satisfactorily their USW education helped prepare them in written and oral communication, critical thinking, knowledge in their field, applying skills in their workplace, and professional integrity, 83% of the responding students were satisfied or completely satisfied with their education at the university. However, of the responding students, 60% were not satisfied with their preparation of presentation skills, while 40% were completely satisfied with their preparation in those skills. It should be noted that not all students replied to the prompt on presentation skills preparation, since only the students who felt that the skills were applicable to their degree completed this prompt on the survey. Approximately 90% of the responding students were also likely and very likely to recommend their degree program and the university to a colleague or friend as well as being satisfied or completely satisfied with their overall education at University of the Southwest.
The university employs several methods to identify issues and concerns:

- exit surveys of graduating seniors;
- communications between the student and his/her advisor;
- house visits to residential students;
- faculty classroom-interactions with students; and
- student mentoring provided by faculty and program directors.

These interactions allow students to communicate directly with administrators, faculty, staff, and/or advisors about issues or concerns they have. House visits to residential students may be initiated by the university’s administrative staff, members of student government, or the Dean of Students. Examples of responses to students' concerns are:

- parking lots have been resurfaced and expanded
- outdoor campus lighting has been improved
- greater accessibility to computer labs given
- library hours increased
- dining facilities improved, and
- quality of food and services improved by Great Western Dining.

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

4. B.1: The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

At the beginning of the 2012 calendar year, University of the Southwest implemented a campus-wide program to quantitatively assess student learning outcomes. The assessment program is designed to provide academic leadership with effectiveness of the classroom. Data-driven decisions regarding continuous improvement result from this new program. Using a descriptive-analytics structure, the assessment program significantly expanded USW’s prior efforts to measure, track, and analyze student learning outcomes (Exhibit: 4.B.1.a.). Criterion 4 includes highlights from the analytics and provides an initial benchmark, or baseline, for the effectiveness of academic programs. Key results of the assessment are:

- Students were assessed in every program and in all classes offered by USW
- The initial assessment dataset contained approximately 50,000 data points.
- Almost twice as many females were assessed in 2012. The ratio of female students to males students included in the assessment program was approximately 2:1
- There is a statistically significant difference in the average (mean) total SLO scores of upper level students and lower level students. The difference is only present with Senior-level and Graduate students. This indicates that student skills are progressing with regard to the 5 institutional outcomes (communication, knowledge, critical thinking, integrity, and servant leadership).
• There is a significant correlation between student classification and average course grade. This could indicate that either
  a) students (particularly freshman) may not be adequately prepared when entering the University, or
  b) students are being placed in courses without prior leveling preparation (prerequisite avoidance).
• The cumulative scores for the Servant Leadership SLO were the lowest performing. This indicates the need for additional focus on this institutional outcome in the curriculum.
• There is a significance difference in the average SLO total score between males and females – with females performing better.
• The average total SLO score for the School of Education (SOE) is significantly higher than that of the School of Business and School of Arts and Sciences (Exhibit: 4.B.1.b).

4. B.2: The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

In January 2013, the SB/PS began using the ALEKS program, which is now used in 75% of the business programs math-intensive required courses (i.e., Business Algebra, Business Statistics, Accounting). The ALEKS program produces assessment reports that are used as evidence of program and course review (assessment) as opposed to institutional assessment.

ALEKS is an adaptive learning software that assesses student learning outcomes at the program and course levels. The ALEKS program provides instructors the opportunity to match course/program objectives against unique assessment measures to analyze student performance. Instructors are provided real-time summaries of assessment results via customizable reports.

Based on aggregate data that is based on the faculty’s assessment of the SLOs in their classes, the student achievement at USW is evidenced in the frequency distribution charts for each of the SLOs (i.e., Communication, Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Integrity, and Servant Leadership) (Exhibit: 4.B.2.a). In addition, course grades mirror the SLO frequency distribution.

The scores for assessing SLOs range from a high of 4.0 (equivalent to an A) to a low of 0.0 (equivalent to an F), which aligns with the institutions 4.0 grade-point scale. Therefore, to summarize the SLO scores assessed and final course grades submitted by faculty to the registrar, an analysis of the frequency distribution charts indicates the following:

• For SLO 1-Communication: 49.9% of the students ranked a 4.0 score; 30.6% earned a 3.0 ranking; 9.8% ranked a 2.0; 3.2% ranked a 1.0, and 6.4% ranked a 0.0.
• For SLO 2-Knowledge: 52.3% of the students ranked a 4.0 score; 27.8% earned a 3.0 ranking; 9.5% ranked a 2.0; 4.0% ranked a 1.0, and 6.4% ranked a 0.0.
• For SLO 3-Critical Thinking: 50.7% of the students ranked a 4.0 score; 28.8% earned a 3.0 ranking; 9.5% ranked a 2.0; 4.3% ranked a 1.0, and 6.7% ranked a 0.0.

~ 80 ~
• For SLO 4-Integrity: 56.5% of the students ranked a 4.0 score; 26.2% earned a 3.0 ranking; 7.9% ranked a 2.0; 3.0% ranked a 1.0, and 6.5% ranked a 0.0.
• For SLO 5-Servant Leadership: 44.9% of the students ranked a 4.0 score; 23.4% earned a 3.0 ranking; 11.5% ranked a 2.0; 5.5% ranked a 1.0, and 14.7% ranked a 0.0.
• For Course Grades: 56.0% of the students ranked a 4.0 score (i.e., letter grade of \textit{A}); 22.5% earned a 3.0 ranking (i.e., letter grade of \textit{B}); 8.1% ranked a 2.0 (i.e., letter grade \textit{C}); 3.9% ranked a 1.0 (i.e., letter grade of \textit{D}), and 9.5% ranked a 0.0 (i.e., letter grade of \textit{F}).

If all six frequency charts were to be layered into one chart, the rating and letter grade distributions would be quite similar. The similarities among the distribution charts may indicate that the SLO rankings of students and their resulting letter grades earned in each course are consistent between the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education (\textit{Exhibit: 4.B.2.b}).

As indicated on the frequency distribution charts, a course grade of \textit{A} was earned by 56.0% of the students. From a percentage high of 56.5\% to a low of 44.9\%, the difference in the range of percentages is only 11.6\%. The percentage of students who ranked a \textit{4.0/A} on each of the five SLOs were
- 49.9\% on communication,
- 52.3\% on knowledge,
- 50.7\% on critical thinking,
- 56.5\% on integrity, and
- 44.9\% on servant leadership.

A course grade of \textit{B} was earned by 22.5\% of the students. From a percentage high of 30.6\% to a low of 23.4\%, the difference in the range of percentages is only 8.1\%. The percentage of students who ranked a \textit{3.0/B} on each of the five SLOs were
- 30.6\% on communication,
- 27.8\% on knowledge,
- 28.8\% on critical thinking,
- 26.2\% on integrity, and
- 23.4\% on servant leadership.

A course grade of \textit{C} was earned by 8.1\% of the students. From a percentage high of 11.5\% to a low of 7.9\%, the difference in the range of percentages is 3.6\%. The percentage of students who ranked a \textit{2.0/C} on each of the five SLOs were
- 9.8\% on communication,
- 9.5\% on knowledge,
- 9.5\% on critical thinking,
- 7.9\% on integrity, and
- 11.5\% on servant leadership.
A course grade of D was earned by 3.9% of the students. From a percentage high of 5.5% to a low of 3.0%, the difference in the range of percentages is only 2.5%. The percentage of students that were ranked a 1.0/D on each of the five SLOs were

- 3.2% on communication,
- 4.0% on knowledge,
- 4.3% on critical thinking,
- 3.0% on integrity, and
- 5.5% on servant leadership.

A course grade of F earned by 8.3% of the students. From a percentage high of 14.7% to a low of 6.4%, the difference in the range of percentages is only 8.1%. The percentage of students who were ranked a 0.0/F on each of the five SLOs were

- 6.4% on communication,
- 6.4% on knowledge,
- 6.7% on critical thinking,
- 14.7% on integrity, and
- 9.5% on servant leadership.

4. B. 3: The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

The leadership and faculty with the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business and Professional Studies, and the School of Education have improved student learning and instructional practices as a result of analyzing and using assessment data to drive data-driven improvements ([Exhibit: 4.B.3.a: SOE Data-Driven Improvements; Exhibit: 4.B.3.b: SAS Data-Driven Improvements; Exhibit: 4.B.3.c: SB/PS Data-Driven Improvements]).

4. B.4: The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

Using a quantitative approach to data analytics and performance measurement, the IAAS at USW scores every student in every course with regard to the five institutional learning outcomes. Faculty members are required to conduct a formal assessment of each student using a rubric that uses 4.0 and the highest score and 0.0 as the lowest score for rating each SLO. This scoring system mirrors the University’s grading system of 0.0 to 4.0, with 0.0 being the letter-grade equivalent of an F and with 4.0 indicating the letter-grade equivalent of an A ([Exhibit: 4.B.4.a]).

The formal assessment of each student is tied directly to a course assignment listed in the course syllabus ([Exhibit: 4.B.4.b]) that can be used to validate the score given by the faculty. For example, an instructor might look to a research paper in the class to evaluate the student’s “communication skill” and “knowledge” of the subject. The assessment tool was implemented across the entire University at the beginning of 2012 and resulted in an extensive dataset for analysis. The initial dataset contained approximately 4000 individual student assessment records.
and 50,000 data points. The data were scrubbed and approximately 750 observations were removed for incomplete or incorrect data. After purging, the final dataset contained 3042 observations (n) and 39546 data points. The arrangement and organization of the primary dataset can be seen in the following excerpt:

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The formal assessment of each student should tie directly to a course assignment listed in the course syllabus (Exhibit: 4.B.4.b.) that can be used to validate the score given by the faculty. For example, an instructor might look to a research paper in the class to evaluate the student’s “communication skill” and “knowledge” of the subject. The assessment tool was implemented across the entire University at the beginning of 2012 and resulted in an extensive dataset for analysis. The initial dataset contained approximately 4000 individual student assessment records and 50,000 data points. The data was scrubbed and approximately 750 observations were removed for incomplete or incorrect data. After purging, the final dataset contained 3042 observations (n) and 39546 data points. The arrangement and organization of the primary dataset can be seen in the following excerpt:

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

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

USW is committed to student success. To demonstrate this commitment, the university is dedicated to providing the necessary support service to help retain students, to encourage students to persist in completing their educational goals, and graduating. The efforts of faculty and staff who advise, mentor, and support students personalize services to the extent possible. For example, students who are not attending class regularly, especially during the first week of classes, are contacted to determine if they have a problem that can be resolved so that they can begin participating in class. Through technology alerts on Blackboard and with instructor vigilance, the names of students at-risk for being dropped for lack of participation during the first week of classes or who have stopped attending or logging into their online classes during subsequent weeks, will be reported to the registrar’s office or their advisor and to their athletic coach (if applicable). The registrar’s staff attempt to contact the student and to advise them according in an attempt to help them persist and complete their class(es) (Exhibit: 4.C.1.a).

By communicating with students on a one-on-one basis and with a personalized approach, staff and faculty can reach out to students in an effort to help retain students. With the Mission and Servant Leadership from which to model professional actions, faculty, staff, and administrators strive to create an environment of belonging, with personal attention given to students, to anticipate their needs before a potential problem can occur, and to help provide whatever supports are necessary in order to resolve a problem so that students have a better chance to succeed.

USW’s leadership, faculty, and staff collaborate with each other to improve student retention rates and graduation rates. Once a student is admitted to the University and has registered for classes, the on campus student is required to attend an orientation for freshman and students new to the University.

An advisor is assigned to each student. The student will usually work with the same advisor until graduation (Exhibit: 4.C.1.b). Advisors have access to high school or college transcripts as well as ACT, SAT, or other standardized test scores to assist them with helping students select appropriate coursework, including taking any pre-requisite courses that must be completed successfully before a student can take the next higher-level course. There are prerequisite courses for completing areas of study such as English, mathematics, and science.

Students may complete courses in a traditional on-campus classroom or through distance learning. In addition to course delivery options, course scheduling is made more flexible and dependable through the implementation of a schedule for course rotations and the semester and
term scheduling (i.e., semesters of 16 weeks, terms of 8-weeks for web-based course delivery, and 5-week terms for selected programs in the School of Business.

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

With 25.1% of New Mexico’s population having at least a bachelor’s degree, the state ranks 31st in the nation in this category (percentage of degree holders). While the District of Columbia ranks 1st in the nation with 45.7% of its population having earned degrees, the state with the lowest percentage (15.3%) of people with college degrees is West Virginia. The states surrounding New Mexico have the following percentages of degree-holders:

- Colorado’s ranking is 3rd in the nation with a 35.5% degree completion rate;
- Arizona ranks 17th with 28% of the population with degrees;
- Texas is ranked 35th in the nation with a 24.5% degree completion rate; and
- Oklahoma is ranked 43rd in the nation with 22.9% degree completion rate.

Hence, New Mexico is situated in the middle of the rankings with its four neighboring states, with two states having more people with degrees and with two states having fewer people with degrees. These rankings seem to indicate that the percentage of citizens in New Mexico who complete a post-secondary degree is commensurate with the percentages of degree-holders in near-by states (Exhibit: 4.C.2.a).

Based on this data, University of the Southwest has the challenge and opportunity to help increase the number of degree-seeking and degree-completing individuals in or who come to New Mexico in order to complete a degree. It should be noted that USW’s percentage of degree-completers is 18%, which indicates that the university must continue to improve its retention rates, to encourage and support the perseverance of students toward degree completion, and increasing the percentage of students receiving a degree through USW.

In order to earn a degree, students often need appropriate supports (e.g., encouragement, advising, mentoring) in order to complete their bachelor’s degree. In Part A of the Key Indicators Tool Kit (KIT) the Council of Independent Colleges has included persistence rates for USW first-time, full-time freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, and graduate students. USW’s graduation rates are calculated as the total number of graduates divided by the total number of fall first-time, full-time, degree-seeking student (Exhibit: 4.C.2.b). To help improve graduation rates of USW students a number of interventions are being developed.

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

Based on the information and data provided in prompt 4.C.2, USW is committed to improving its graduate rate through a concerted effort of admitting, advising, mentoring, and learning opportunities. It is imperative that the university faculty and staff work closely with students to help them persist in completing their degrees.
Degree audits are available through a student’s portal or by contacting and communicating with the appropriate student advisor. Both faculty and students are able to review which courses have been completed and which courses still need to be completed in order to graduate.

Degree plans are reviewed, at least annually, and modified as needed to meet national and state mandates (e.g., teacher licensure regulations) and to meet changing student interests, needs, and demands.

It is essential for the leadership, faculty, and staff to improve and strengthen retention efforts. Among the nonprofit, private institutions of higher learning, USW offers a tuition rate that is one of the lowest as compared with other comparable institutions (Exhibit: 4.C.3.b). Furthermore, USW does not charge out-of-state tuition (Exhibit: 4.C.3.c).

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Dean of Enrollment Management and Campus Life has helped coordinate and streamline the admissions process and directs students to the Registrar’s office for an appropriate advisor, to financial aid if needed, and to the business office. The new dean is charged with oversight of and improvement of student services and strives to improve and strengthen student retention, persistence, and graduation efforts and outcomes.

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

USW’s has developed specific processes and methodologies for data collection, data analysis, dissemination of data information, and data availability to all interested constituencies, including the general public.

Data collection begins when students apply for admission. Students submit an Application for Admission (Exhibit: 4.C.4.a), which includes a variety of information: educational history/background, degree/major of interest, academic history, demographic information, contact information, and high school or college transcripts. This document facilitates a student’s admission to the university and verifies information required for acceptance. In addition to the previously described information and documents, students may also submit test scores from ACT, SAT, GED, or other qualifying or standardized exams. In some cases a social security card and driver license will be added to the admission data.

Although students may complete a paper application for admission, most apply online through the USW website and submit or request that documents be sent (e.g., official transcripts from high school and/or all colleges/ universities that the student attended). Data may be entered by University personnel or by applying students themselves through online access to admissions applications.
Data analysis follows the collection of admissions data. After students enroll in courses, the courses that they complete, withdraw from, or repeat are recorded on their transcript. Other data are compiled each semester and term that details student and enrollment data by staff with the Office of the Registrar and/or the Office of Enrollment Management & Student Life.

During each term/semester, the Registrar develops and submits the required IPEDS to NMHED (New Mexico Higher Education Department), which then publishes the retention rates and graduation rates for all colleges and universities in New Mexico. Each term, the NMHED submits USW’s IPEDS data to the Federal government, which were received from the Registrar.

Admissions and IPEDS data provide the primary sources of data which can include the following: state and national enrollment data, ratios of full-time faculty to part-time faculty, institutional financial aid rates, acceptance rates, retention rates, graduation rates, years of accreditation, cost of attendance, default rates, job placement rates, and other campus elements. Data from ACT/SAT scores can also be utilized to determine scholarship eligibility for those who apply. The following IPEDS data reports are available for the following academic years: 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013.

Faculty or staff can request assistance from the staff for the management information systems and technology in order to help provide reports, charts, graphs, and other data that will assist with data analysis that can be used to drive decisions for improving procedures, practices, and programs (Exhibit: 4.C.4.b.). Data, which is displayed graphically, can be readily and easily understood, which helps facilitate accuracy of interpretation of data and to support the University’s decisions related to enrollment, graduation, degree offerings, program development, staffing, and other concerns.

USW complies with the regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Therefore, the University does not disclose education records and information without prior consent from individual students. However, if data are considered directory information or fall under one of the exceptions provided under the law, education data and information can be disseminated and shared with various agencies and organizations. Educational information that is reported in aggregate form, such as the number of students admitted to the university, can be published without the consent of students. This type of data can be requested from the Office of Enrollment Management and Student Life, the Office of the Registrar, or other administrative offices. The staff can process eligible requests or consider them on a case-by-case basis if any question arises regarding the type of requested information. Data and information requested from the press are provided by the Director of Development Operations and Public Relations.

4.C. Strengths:
- The institution implemented a campus-wide assessment tool to consistently evaluate student learning and institutional effectiveness.
- Essentially every student in every course was assessed as part of this significant undertaking and the data yielded some solid ideas for improvement.

4.C. Challenges:
• While the institutional-based assessment tool provides a broad view of effectiveness with regard to general learning outcomes, a more focused tool is needed to evaluate individual program/topic/course objectives.

4.C. Recommendations:
• Supplement the universal, institutional-based assessment model with an automated, more focused assessment measure for individual program and course objectives. This will provide a more focused level of detail for future improvement.
Criterion Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution’s resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.
Introduction

“Tough times don’t last...tough people do.”
--Anonymous

University of the Southwest, like many other universities, is facing tough times, especially when it comes to resources. Having the characteristics of the transitive property in mathematics, resources effect planning; planning effects institutional efficiency; and institutional efficiency effects a multitude of factors; however, University of the Southwest closes the transitive property loop through its mission, its strong community support, its proactive faculty and staff, and its innovative leadership. Through visionary planning and preparation for learning in an age of technological education, the human element seems to have been exchanged for technological initiatives; however, University of the Southwest continues to stand strong in its preservation of the human factor, settings its graduates, students, faculty, and staff apart with servant leadership initiatives. By implementing servant leadership in the wise use of our resources and planning, USW institutional effectiveness reaches beyond the classroom and improves the quality of life and standard of living of all involved in and at the University.

By using the 10 objectives of Servant Leadership, outlined by Robert K. Greenleaf, (Greenleaf, 2005) of: listening; empathy and healing; awareness; persuasion, conceptualization; foresight; stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community, USW’s resources, planning and institutional effectiveness serve its students, staff, faculty and community. University of the Southwest’s revenue base is from: tuition and fees (69%), student housing and meals (12%), and donations (14%). Operational revenue is used to support daily operations, the cost of construction, student services, administration, plant operations, and distant education.

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

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

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

USW funded all ongoing operations with operating surpluses for many years resulting in the accumulation of an operating cash reserve which was invested in strategic enrollment growth initiatives in fiscal years 2009-13 (Exhibit: 5.A.1.a). The Cabinet, which represents all areas of the University, serves as the Budget Committee by submitting requests for funding for staffing, physical and technological needs (Exhibit: 5.A.1.b).

In general, USW’s financial condition is stable. Recent operating losses have been approved by the Board of Trustees and incurred as part of the initiative to increase enrollment. All operating
losses have been funded by the previously accumulated cash reserve. The only debt incurred by the institution is long-term, no interest construction debt that has been used to fund the construction of a residence hall. The debt has very favorable terms including a 3 to 1 forgiveness component as the debt is repaid.

The enrollment initiatives have yielded significant increases in tuition and fee revenue resulting in a 67% increase in net tuition revenue from fiscal 2011 to fiscal 2013.

5. A.2: The institution resource allocating process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.

USW’s budget is annually approved by the Board of Trustees, yet continually audited by the Board of Trustee Finance Committee (Exhibit: 5.A.2.a), which meets five or six times each year. Adherence to the approved allocation of resources for each department is a campus-wide initiative and all departments are provided monthly expenditure analysis reports, showing each department head the expenditures broken down into the following categories: office supplies, program supplies, printing/copying, postage, long distance, travel, meals, professional development, memberships and dues, subscriptions, internet and/or cable. Columns are presented with dollar and percentage data with the categories of: Current Month Actual, Year-to-Date Actual, Total Budget, Budget Remaining, and % Remaining, keeping all department heads apprised of their expenditures and accountable for their wise use of such precious resources (Exhibit: 5.A.2.b).

Budget Revision forms are used by department heads to reallocate funds internally from one line item to another. This form must be signed by the department head making the request, then the form is signed by the Provost and approved by the CFO. Other budget revisions must be approved by the Board of Trustees in a formal meeting, where the revision is presented to the board and approved by the members.

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

USW goals are incorporated into the institution’s organization, resources, and opportunities and are reflected in the mission statement. Beginning with the organization, the University’s mission statement is listed on each job description (Exhibit: 5.A.3.a).

The mission statement espouses that USW is a “Christ-centered educational community.” Therefore, a weekly Chapel Service is held. Directed by the Campus Minister in conjunction with the Campus Ministry Team, all faiths and denominations are represented and celebrated, allowing all different aspects of Christianity to be explored and appreciated.

Chapel attendance is strongly encouraged and well attended by faculty and staff. Two courses in non-denominational religion are a graduation requirement of the University, and in order to suffice that requirement, attendance of three semesters of chapel is permitted. The Campus Minister oversees the students and their participation for those who are enrolled for credit. For
those unable to physically attend, the weekly chapel services are streamed and also placed on the website for listening and viewing, or reviewing.

5. A.4: The institution’s staff, in all areas, is appropriately qualified and trained.

The Human Resources Department at USW is responsible for ensuring appropriately qualified and trained personnel are employed in all areas. Beginning with the job selection process, the HR Department advertises internally, locally, regionally, statewide, and/or nationwide. The HR Director works closely with the appropriate Provost, deans, and department heads in order to advertise the correct titles, positions, and job responsibilities, also including the University’s mission. As interested individuals send in their qualifications and applications, HR sends the qualified applicants information to the appropriate supervisor for further action(s). HR is also responsible for the correct classification for the job and proper credentials before advertising the open position (Exhibit: 5.A.4.a).

Once employment is offered, the staff candidate must meet with the HR Director in order to go through Staff Training. The USW 102-page Staff Handbook is reviewed and the employee must acknowledge receipt, understanding and adherence to the policies and procedures as outlined in the handbook. A formal sexual harassment video (Exhibit: 5.A.4.b) with an assessment must be viewed and passed by all USW employees. Appropriate benefit packages are offered at the Staff Training, and the employee is allowed to choose their benefit package options. Also during this training, the University’s values, policies, and mission are discussed and acknowledged. Health insurance, life insurance, and a drug free workplace policy are included. Critical Incident and Emergency Procedures Plan are outlined, and an employee’s cell number is requested for USW internal notifications. The employee is given a tour of the facility and the work area by the supervisor. The Office of Student Life provides USW identification cards for all employees as requested.

HR provides employee morale and service initiatives through its annual Christmas Party, Service Award Ceremony, and monthly awarding of the Marvelous Mustang. Employee benefit updates that are communicated through e-mail and face-to-face presentations, keep all employees current with their benefit and insurance options.

Student employees compliment the University’s staff support and are identified through work-study funds in conjunction with the Financial Aid Office. Students who are eligible for work-study are interviewed by respective departments and are paid an hourly rate through the Financial Aid Office. Staff Professional Development not only improves the quality of service to the campus, but it also improves the service to students and aids in developing the individual person.

Improving the quality of life and standard of living for students through the entire educational experience, University of the Southwest also provides this opportunity of improvement to its staff by the following endeavors:

- Monthly lunch meetings: Service Leadership in Academics
• Faculty and staff are encouraged to represent professional organizations locally, regionally, and or nationally.
• Professional development monies are included in annual budgets so that faculty and staff may attend conferences and seminars, which will aid in their professional development
• Tuition assistance, in addition for time to attend class
• On-campus, internal training/professional development is provided to faculty and staff in all Schools.
• Employee evaluations

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

Each year the Cabinet submits budgetary requests to the Senior Administrators in addition to budget adjustments required in accordance with the Strategic Plan Action Steps (Exhibit: 5.A.5.a). The Administrative Team approves any adjustments required to bring the preliminary budget into balance or result in a budgeted deficit no greater than the available operating cash reserve. The Preliminary budget is reviewed and revised, if needed, by the finance Committee of the USW Board of Trustees. The Finance Committee presents the proposed budget to the USW Board of Trustees at the March meeting.

The budget is formally revised during the year as needs differ from budgeted projections – primarily with regard to enrollment. The proposed budget revisions are considered and approved by the Finance Committee of the Board. The Finance Committee proposes the revisions for the final consideration and approval by the USW Board of Trustees and/or Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees throughout the year (Exhibit: 5.A.5.b).

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

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

The University of the Southwest President reports directly to the Board of Trustees for the University. The Board of Trustees is kept informed, via the President, of all entities and operations of the university. The President receives reports by the Provost, Dean of Enrollment Services/Registrar, Athletic Director/Dean of Students, Campus Steward, and Vice President/CFO that is submitted to the Board of Trustees as a Board Packet.

Board of Trustees

As board positions are vacated or expired, current board members make recommendations for suitable additions to the Board of Trustees. A membership vote is held, electing the new
member to fulfill the vacant position. The new member will either fulfill the remaining term of an existing position, or serve a full term, which is 5 years. As of this date, classes are in place with a full membership roster for 2013-2017.

The Board of Trustees is further divided into: Executive Officers; Executive Committee; Academic Program; Advancement; Enrollment Services and Student Life; Finance and Audit; and Institutional Resources. The Executive Officer positions are: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Executive Committee consists of: Vice Chair of Board; Chair of Advancement; Chair of Institutional Resources; Chair of Enrollment Services and Student Life; Chair of Board; Trustee-at-Large; Treasurer of Board; Secretary of Board; Chair of Academic Program, and Chair of Finance and Audit. The membership is assigned to different committees, serving on at least one committee. The Advancement Committee includes the entire Board as a committee of the whole. The Board of Trustees consists of twenty-six people, representing a cross-section of the region, with varied interests and talents. Three of the board members also serve on the USW Foundation Board of Directors.

The Board of Trustees meets four times per year, with new members inducted by an orientation session. The training session includes distribution of copies of the university’s by-laws, articles of incorporation, material of effective trusteeship, an effective governing board guide, explanation of the university’s mission statement, and a membership to Trusteeship: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

There is high fiduciary responsibility taken by the Chairman of the Board and the Chair of the Finance Committee. At each full board meeting, members of the administration team make presentations, regarding their area. For each full board meeting and committee meetings, agendas are articulated, minutes are kept, and the board’s actions are in concurrence with the 5-year Strategic Plan initiatives.

University Governance

The President is the leader of the university, supported by an administration team consisting of the Provost, Dean of Enrollment Services, Dean of Students/Athletic Director, Campus Steward, and Vice President/CFO. The Administrative Team meets on a monthly basis to communicate and execute the University’s business matters. The Administrative Team meets in order to strategically discuss USW’s day-to-day operations, concerns, critical issues, and to cross-reference the advancement of the institution in correlation with the 3-year strategic plan and adherence to the University’s mission.

The Office of the Provost, newly named from the Office of Academic Services, consists of an executive administrative assistant, the three academic Deans for the institution, (Dean of Business, Dean of Education, and Dean of Arts and Sciences), Dean of Library, Director of Technology, Registrar, and Associate Academic Dean of Student Success/Director of Engagement. Under each dean or director, is a hierarchy of support staff, which serves the University well in performing the academic and student service needs of the institution. The Provost maintains the organizational charts for the University. The Director of Housing and
Security, supervises a full-time and part-time security personnel, along with Resident Directors, and Resident Assistants.

The Vice President for Administrative Services/CFO is responsible for the financial operations of the University which include the Business office function (accounts receivable, accounts payable, cash collection, budgeting, payroll and personnel, and financial report and analysis. The Financial Aid Office reports to the VP/CFO and administers Federal and State financial aid for the benefit of our students. The Financial Aid Office also awards and tracks institutional discounts. In addition, the VP/CFO supervises the University mail Service operation and is the point-person for the outsourced food service function at USW.

Enrollment Services is now housed with campus life and under this umbrella are the following positions: Dean of Enrollment Management and Campus Life; Recruitment Coordinator; Recruitment Specialist; Director of Admissions & Recruitment; Director of Marketing and Development Operations; and Campus Life Director. The registrar’s office as currently structured includes the following: Registrar and three Advisors. Online program delivery includes: Graduate Advisor and Graduate Online Admission/Assistant Graduate Advisor. Ninety percent of our on-campus students are student athletes, representing softball and baseball; men’s and women’s: soccer, tennis, and basketball; cross country and track. Our Intercollegiate athletics is directed by the Dean of Athletics, who in addition to the coaches of each team, also directs the athletic and assistant athletic trainer.

Overseeing the physical plant and housekeeping is the Campus Steward, who reports directly to the President. This position serves as the institution’s liaison between architects, engineers and contractors for the capital projects or major improvements. Serving on the Institutional Resources committee to the Board of Trustees, the Campus Steward heads efforts to establish, maintain, and implement a comprehensive plan to enhance the campus physical facilities. The Campus Steward oversees the budget responsibilities of the physical plant, maintenance, and the University grounds.

Faculty

Faculty report to their respective deans, however; the Faculty Council is organized to provide communication, representation, and coordination of academic endeavors. Monthly meetings are held and by evidence in the Faculty Handbook, teaching full-time faculty are required to attend faculty meetings, while adjunct faculty are encouraged:

The teaching faculty of the University of the Southwest perform as a minimum the following specific duties and meet the following responsibilities:

- Attend regular faculty/administrative staff and division or school meetings;
- Maintain at least 8 (eight) posted office hours per week for student consultation.

(Faculty Handbook, p. 40)

Student Life
The Student Government Association, SGA, is student-driven, yet facilitated by the Dean of Student Life. With the help of the Undergraduate Retention Coordinator, SGA represents the student body and provides leadership for intercollegiate intramurals, activities, and governance. Offices for SGA include: President; Vice Presidents of Social Activities, Intramurals, and Media Relations; Secretary/Treasurer. The President of SGA attends Board of Trustee meetings. Outlined in the Student Handbook, SGA adheres to the University’s mission, has institutional objectives, an honor code, and separate sets of expectations and standards for: community life, spiritual life, residential life. SGA activities include but are not limited to: Intercollegiate athletics, intramural athletics, new student orientations, Southwest Cultural Pride Club (SCPC), and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). They hold meetings each Monday at 11:00 a.m.

Special Interest Groups: Sigma Tau Delta, is an English Honor Society sponsored by a member of the Arts and Sciences faculty National Honor Society and the faculty member sponsors Alpha Chi, for USW students also.

ENACTUS, another special interest group, is formerly Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE). Promoting entrepreneurial actions through business and servant-leadership endeavors, the ENACTUS team is a student-lead organization, sponsored by a fulltime advisor. Officers for the ENACTUS team include: President, and four Vice Presidents: Communication, Finance, Administration, and Projects. Weekly Execute Team meetings consisting of the advisor and officers are held, in addition to weekly team meetings.

Other special interests provided to students are the Jack Maddox Distinguished Lecture Series, in which nationally prominent speakers are invited to the campus to visit informally with students and faculty members. These speakers then deliver a formal presentation to the area public free of charge. Some of our most recent speakers have included Laura Bush, Jo Frost, Dr. Robert Ballard, Jean Chatzky, Peyton Manning, and Colin Powell (Exhibit: 5.B.1.a).

The Hatton W. Sumners Speaker Series, also known as the Free Enterprise Dinner, provides USW students, staff, and the surrounding communities the opportunity to better understand the principles of American democratic self-government and fosters leadership in preserving our heritage of personal freedom and responsibility. Some of its most recent speakers have included Erin Gruwell, Tom Sullivan, and Captain Scott O'Grady. The 2013 Trustee of Free Enterprise Dinner will feature Dr. Jack Van Ens. Also at this time, a community entrepreneur is honored for their diligence in being a role model and advocate of free enterprise and the principles of the American democracy (Exhibit: 5.B.1.b).

5. B.2: The governing board is knowledgeable about the institutional it provides oversight for the institution’s financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

The Board of Trustees provide oversight to the university financial policies. The Audit & Finance Committee provides leadership in this area, and coordinates with the President and VP/CFO with regularly scheduled meetings six times each year. This committee reviews
monthly financial reports, the IRS Form 990 (Exhibit: 5.B.2.a), and the annual audited financial statement. The Form 990 is prepared by the VP/CFO and reviewed by the President prior to review of the Form by the Finance Committee. The Form is submitted to the full Board of Trustees for review and discussion prior to filing. Minutes of the Finance Committee meetings are compiled by the VP/CFO. The Board Policy Manual (Exhibit: 5.B.2.b), along with the role of a Board of Trustee member is provided in the new board member training at the beginning of the academic year for all new board members.

Academic policies are the responsibility of the Provost and are supported by the Board of Trustees Academic Committee. Supervision of faculty is the responsibility of the respective dean.

University of the Southwest meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities and three Board of Trustee members also serve on the Foundation Board and Audit Committee. The University defines its policies for employees in the Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, and Staff Handbooks and reviews them periodically to ensure minimal conflict within relations. Athlete’s eligibility is closely monitored by the Athletic Director and Dean of Students. NAIA serves as a guideline for USW.

5. B.3: The institution enables the involvement of its administration, faculty, staff, and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative efforts.

The Faculty Handbook (Exhibit: 5.B.3.a) is indicative of involving administration, faculty, staff and students in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes. The Handbook gives basic policy information and is not intended to constitute a contract or guarantee employment for any person. The purpose of the Handbook is to provide quality education for students in the context of the University mission. The manner in which a quality education is carried out is the responsibility of the administration, faculty, staff, and students of the University.

Recognizing the Statement of Professional Ethics as set forth by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), adopted in June 1987, University of the Southwest uses the general guideline to exercise responsibility to students and colleagues when undertaking sponsored research (Exhibit: 5.B.3.b). (Faculty Handbook, pages 5-6)

Specifically, the Faculty Handbook addresses the involvement of administration, faculty, staff and students in setting academic requirements and policy. Three areas of leadership foster overall effectiveness of the University. The areas are: Academic Leadership, Committees, and Faculty Council.

Academic Leadership:

The Dean is the head of an academic school and is selected by the Provost. Each dean serves at the pleasure of the Provost. Changes in a dean’s assignments will not affect his/her faculty status.

Dean’s perform the following duties and meets the following responsibilities:
• Supervise and stay continually aware of staff performance in the following areas:
  o Depth and breadth of teaching proficiency, including online off-site programs
  o Effectiveness in contributing to overall divisional administration
  o Effectiveness of teaching
  o Volunteer efforts, contributions to and performance in activities outside the School, which enhance the overall University welfare
  o Student advising effectiveness
  o Overall satisfactory service.

• Counsel school faculty on behavior:
  o Deviation from stated school policy
  o Unprofessional behavior
  o Remedies for behavior

• Participate in the faculty reappointment and promotion process
• Assist in recruiting and selecting new faculty
• Approve course syllabi in the school
• Develop and administer school budgets
• Recommend to the Provost all faculty teaching assignments, the need for overloads within the school, and summer school assignments
• Schedule and conduct regular faculty meetings
• Coordinate selection of, and place orders for textbooks in the school
• Teach at least six (6) credit hours per semester unless special arrangements are made with the Provost
• Serve on designated University committees
• Maintain a current inventory of the school’s equipment and supplies
• Plan for and purchase new equipment and materials
• Monitor school’s classrooms and report maintenance needs to Campus Steward
• Administer the annual Faculty Self-Evaluation
• Conduct an annual self-evaluation conference with each faculty member; the results of which are noted on the self-evaluation form
• Conduct classroom performance observations and student evaluations of faculty as appropriate
• Perform other duties as determined by the particular Deans and the Provost.

Committees:

Faculty members are expected to serve on committees as needed as their role in the governance of the University. University-wide committees should hold regular meetings, submit reports, and offer recommendations to the President, the Provost, the appropriate Vice President, or the Dean as appropriate.

The President and the Provost are considered ex-officio members of all committees and shall be notified of all meetings. The following committees exist and meet on a regular basis:
  • Academic Program Review Committee

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Faculty Council:

The Faculty Council discusses items that have been brought to them by the members of the faculty or administration. They also discuss and vote on items presented to them by the standing or ad hoc committees. The Faculty Council may pass resolutions of items they would like to initiate or change. These resolutions are then passed on to the Provost. The Provost will address or direct the recommendation as appropriate. The recommendations of the Faculty Council are advisory only and are subject to modification or rejection at the discretion of the administration and/or Board of Trustees of the University.

Faculty Council meets once per month, but may also divide into smaller groups for specialized meetings. A chairperson is elected by the group at the last academic meeting of the year for the upcoming year and has the responsibility of calling the meetings, setting the agenda, conducting meetings, and passing resolution and voting results to the Provost. The Recorder, also elected by the Council at the last academic meeting of the year, has the responsibility of recording the minutes of each meeting and sending them to the Chair who will distribute them to the membership.

Membership of the Faculty Council is comprised of the teaching faculty who are full, half-time, or three-quarter time and have received a teaching contract issued by the Provost. Administrative faculty are those persons such as the University President, Provost, Vice President for Administrative Services/CFA, Dean of Enrollment Services, Dean of Student Life, Director of Scarborough Memorial Library, Registrar, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Provost, and those who possess the educational qualifications for faculty rank but whose primary professional responsibilities are outside the classroom. The Provost will update the list of Administrative Faculty annually with the President’s endorsement.

Affiliate and Adjunct faculty are not members of the faculty council; however, they are welcome to attend meetings. A quorum is necessary for a vote of the group to be considered valid. A quorum for the Faculty Council will consist of half plus one of the membership.
Core Component 5.C: USW engages in systematic and integrated planning.

5. C.1: The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.

University of the Southwest uses its five-year Strategic Plan (Exhibit: 5.C.1.a) to allocate its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities. Outlined with six specific goals for the next three years, the Strategic Plan Action Steps is approved by the Board of Trustees and implemented by the University faculty and staff under the guidance of the President and his Administrative Team. The goals are defined in the areas of: Student Quality and Campus Climate; Academic Distinction; Personnel Considerations; Marketing; Facilities and Equipment; and Finances.

The Board of Trustees Executive Committee has the fiduciary responsibility to make budget revisions and allocation re-alignments as concerns or issues arise, for the best interest of the students, faculty, staff, and overall operations of the institution. Department heads and deans use an established budget reallocation form in order to reallocate funds; however, the request must be approved by the appropriate supervisor and the VP/CFO, before being presented to the Executive Committee and the full Board of Trustees approval.

Monthly budget statements (Exhibit: 5.C.1.b) are sent to each director with current month actual financial information, year-to-date, total budget, budget remaining, and percent remaining categories, so the entire University financial responsibility is shared among the participating entities. This ensures accountability on the part of faculty and staff to make wise uses of resources in each area. The goals for implementing this process are:

- To make directors accurately aware of their budgets, expenditures, and remaining balances of funds
- To consider wise use of resources
- To communicate the need and use of resources
- To link the budget to the strategic plan
- To accommodate changes in the budget if revenues fall above or below projections for the year

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

The institution evaluates student learning as well as operations and sets a strategic plan for growth for a three year period by the Board of Trustees (Exhibit: 5.C.2.a). The Student Success staff with also evaluates students and updates regularly a student’s status within their courses. By using the data from the SLO’s, student entrance and exit surveys, the processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting are data-driven.

Student Learning

Students are evaluated within the guidelines of typical class performance by each instructor in each course; however, they are also evaluated in terms of completion of their degree and
regardless of their major students are expected to demonstrate ability in five essential areas: Communication, Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Service Learning, and Academic & Professional Integrity. Students’ SLOs are evaluated by their instructors at the end of each course, and Criterion 4 reflects an in-depth explanation of the SLO’s quantitative results. End-of-course assessments are imbedded into every course and allow students to assess themselves in the five essential areas.

USW is committed to affordable, quality education and ties activities and initiatives to the enhancement of the academic programs at USW. Under the area of Student Life, the Undergraduate Retention Coordinator (UGRC) communicates with faculty and adjunct professors at the mid-term for the 8-week courses and at the 4, 8, and 12-week intervals for the 16-week courses, identifying at-risk students and situations. Since 90% of the on-campus students are athletes, the Retention Coordinator also collaborates with the athletic coaches and monitors, maintains, and gives feedback to a well-attended study hall. These study-halls held three days per week for an hour each day, give an additional 48 hours/semester of guidance and are attended by an average of 7.5% of the on-campus student population. In addition, individual tutoring sessions are coordinated in this office on an as-needed basis.

Student learning is also enhanced by regularly scheduled math and English labs, monitored by the math and English faculty, but coordinated through the office of Student Life. Students who take advantage of this opportunity have made academic strides.

Operations, Planning and Budgeting

USW’s Board of Trustees umbrellas all the functions of the University, including its processes for evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting. The 3-year Strategic Plan Action Steps approved by the Board of Trustees gives the University vision and foresight, with six goals that address major areas of the University:

Goal 1: Student Quality and Campus Climate
Goal 2: Academic Distinction
Goal 3: Personnel Considerations
Goal 4: Marketing
Goal 5: Facilities and Equipment
Goal 6: Finances

The Strategic Plan Action Steps is specifically outlined for each academic year: FY 2012-2013, FY 2013-2014, and FY 2014-2015. This allows the University to link the processes for assessment of operations, planning and budgeting on a rolling-basis, continually making improvements, additions, changes, and evaluating the six major areas of the institution.

5. C.3: The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
Data is what drives the USW Board of Trustee’s development of the USW Strategic Plan Action Steps (Exhibit: 5.C.3.a), which are reviewed, revised, and approved at a two-year interval. This action plan includes processes, personnel changes, plans for recruiting, financial planning and other areas of planning. Communication and collaborative planning is the basis for successful implementation of the Strategic Plan Action Steps. By planning in bi-annual cycles, the vision and mission of the University keep current. Supported by data (Exhibit: 5.C.3.a) received from student surveys, alumni inquiries, faculty council, cabinet, and community focus groups, USW encompasses the whole institution with the considerations of both internal and external constituent groups, affecting a variety of areas.

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

The Board of Trustees, the President, and the Academic Team understand the capacity of the University and, with their leadership, guide the faculty and staff to operate efficiently and effectively within these parameters. Data drives the projections of institutional resources for the future in a conservative direction, and historical data provide guidance and direction for the Strategic Plan Action Steps (Exhibit: 5.C.4.a). Enrollment, economic trends, and state support are reviewed through the appropriate departments, deans. Up-to-date information is provided to the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees in scheduled meetings. Any changes, positive or negative, in regards to the institution’s resources are pro-actively addressed immediately.

Basing decisions on student needs and available resources, USW uses demographic information and national trends to forecast enrollment revenues. The VP/CFO and the Director of Financial Aid attend trainings and seminars in order to keep abreast of changes with state and federal funding. The Dean of Enrollment/Registrar and Financial Aid Director ensures fiduciary accountability by adhering to strict participation guidelines in face-to-face classes and distance education courses, in order to be in compliance with federal and state funding (Exhibit: 5.C.4.a).

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

The institution’s planning process uses a decision making model that allows for the anticipation of globalization and demographic shifts along with the upgrades (Exhibit: 5.C.5.a) in the technological world that affect students as well as faculty and staff members.

- Classrooms are equipped with up-to-date computer (which is updated) every three years
- Instructors are given the option of having laptops with tablet capabilities which is also update every three years
- Classroom are equipped with wireless projectors that have connectivity to faculty laptop tablets
- Buildings on campus have wireless internet access
• In 2012-2013 the USW partnered with Savant Learning Systems to offer a 100% online Masters in Business Administration as well as an online Bachelors in Criminal Justice.
• The University of the Southwest offers a BBA in Global Business Management to support globalization and International Business.
• USW launched Blackboard 9.1 in 2013 to upgrade with the technological changes in academics.
• Research on demographic shifts (Exhibit: 5.C.5.b)

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

5. D.1: The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.

USW has developed and implemented a program review process for all academic and non-academic programs and departments, and are evaluated on a cyclical basis, according to their respective area. All programs are evaluated according to their effectiveness, efficiency, and use of resources. Criterion Four, Sub-component 4a addresses this evaluation process more specifically.

Academics

An Admission Survey and End-of-Course Survey provide data for the University to improve performance for the admissions process and for each course. The feedback from these surveys is critical to providing a picture of the function and structure of the admission process and the classroom experience from our students’ perspective, and helps us in improving the function and effectiveness of our programs.

Personnel

USW provides job descriptions for each position at the University. A job description template (Exhibit: 5.D.1.a) provides the basis for all employees of the University, connecting each position to the University’s mission and clearly defining: job title, FLSA classification, reports to, position goal, position summary, essential functions, other responsibilities, education, experience and skills required. Job descriptions are reviewed and discussed with each employee, signed, dated, and documented by the supervisor. A position goal is what binds the employee to the University and its mission.

Position Goal: The goal for each member of the campus community is to believe and live consistently by the principles of the mission of the University. The USW mission is as follows:

University of the Southwest is a Christ-centered educational community dedicated to developing men and women for a lifetime of servant leadership by emphasizing individual faith, responsibility, and initiative.

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Teaching at the University of the Southwest adheres to belief in God, in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and in the separation of church and state.

University of the Southwest strives for excellence in academic curriculum, campus life programming, and student activities in a supportive educational community where freedom of thought and expression are honored and the demonstration of faith in acts of service is encouraged.

At University of the Southwest, students are instructed and mentored by a faculty and staff who demonstrate Christ-centered values and maintain an environment where students can live and work cooperatively, valuing the multiple cultures from which they come.

As a community of initiative, University of the Southwest challenges graduates to become enterprising member of our society contributing to the common good by advocating and participating in the productive commerce of free enterprise, the constitutional privilege of self-government, and the practical contributions of community service.

Employee Self-Evaluations ([Exhibit: 5.D.1.b]) are performed during the spring term, according to the position and department to which the employee reports. Employees are rated by a scale of: Outstanding, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Unsatisfactory, in the following categories: Job Knowledge; Organizing Ability; Initiative; Judgment; Adaptability; Dealings with People; Attitude; Reliability; and Resourcefulness. The four-parts of the evaluation are very inclusive and descriptive of job performance and are outlined as

- Part 1: Rate the employee by checking the appropriate box and enter comments to support the rating directly below.
- Part 2: Achievement of Previous Goals
- Part 3: List the employee’s strengths, weaknesses, recommendations for improvement. Are the employee’s skills being fully utilized, and what training or skills development should be implemented that would fully develop employee’s potential
- Part 4: New Goals

By using these employee self-evaluations, the past and present are taken into consideration for preparing for the future in each person’s job responsibility and accountability towards moving the University forward in its Mission and with the USW Strategic Action Plan Steps.

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

The involvement of the Cabinet and the Administrative Team in the budgeting process provides the opportunity to improve effectiveness throughout the institution ([Exhibit: 5.D.2.a]). The ongoing review and revision of the operating budget allows for timely response to improve efficiencies and effectiveness in all areas of programming and service ([Exhibit: 5.D.2.b])
Criterion 5 Strengths:
- Fiscal resources, clean audits
- Dedicated faculty and staff
- Physical structures have no debt
- Solid Board of Trustees that are oriented to USW and community
- Distinguished Lecture Series, ENACTUS, Hatton W. Sumners Speaker Series

Criterion 5 Challenges:
- Funds used to outsource recruiting that could be accomplished in-house
- Attractiveness of USW and area to new “qualified” faculty and staff; lack of qualified applicant pool
- Maintenance of old buildings and adequate athletic facilities for current programs, (i.e. tennis courts for tennis program)
- Low employee morale and high turnover rate
- Budget restrictions on ENACTUS

Criterion 5 Self-Recommendations:
- Investigate in-house recruiting strategies and make a change when out-sourcing contract expires
- Have competitive salary packages to attract qualified employees
- Fundraising effort specifically for existing programs and allow fundraising for special interest campus groups