Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

A Full-Scale Evaluation Committee Report

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Las Vegas, Nevada

April 19-21, 2010

A Confidential Report Prepared for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
That Represents the Views of the Evaluation Committee
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Evaluation Committee Report  
University of Nevada Las Vegas  
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Introduction

Ideally, the decennial accreditation exercise complements an institution’s ongoing process of strategic planning, reflection, and refinement. In preparation for this visit, the community of the University of Nevada Las Vegas has examined itself with reference to the nine standards of “best practice” developed by its peer institutions in the Northwest. This evaluation committee has come as colleagues to engage in a shared reflection with the UNLV community, and has set out its findings in this Report in order, first, to advise the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in its deliberations, and, second, to leave a record for the university that will assist its further planning and operation. In doing so, we the committee hope our work will lead to a shared understanding of and commitment to the immediate as well as longer-term tasks ahead.

So while it is an integral part of the process that the evaluation committee visits the campus, it is, nevertheless, an honor to do so. We are grateful for the generous hospitality extended to us by all members of the UNLV community, those who conceived, planned, and executed the self study process, through to those who coordinated the logistics of our schedules, and to the drivers of our shuttle van.

Lastly, we would acknowledge that in discharging our responsibility to conduct this evaluation, we all have benefited enormously from the opportunity to “compare notes” with colleagues at UNLV regarding both the timely as well as the perennial challenges of higher education—challenges that transcend any single institution or type of institution and that are common to our work in higher education wherever it is done.

Report on the Self Study

The evaluation committee readily acknowledges that great care and effort went into the preparation of the self-study report. The product is well presented, formatted using as organizing principles the Standards of the Commission, and including at the end of each section a “Summary” that sets out strengths as well as challenges and opportunities. An additional strength of the self-study is its regular, and helpful, reference to the findings of earlier Commission actions, including Focused Interim Reports and Visits. In a very real sense, the self-study report serves as a blueprint for this, the evaluation committee’s report, insofar as it anticipates this document’s analysis, findings, and conclusions. The committee would further compliment UNLV on the parties responsible for the preparation of the self-study. In the end, it is clear that the UNLV community undertook the study so that it might better understand, evaluate, and improve on current operations, not merely to explain or defend them.

Were the committee to make a suggestion for improvement of the self-study report, it would be to recommend that the report conclude its chronology of events closer to the time of the committee’s visit. Given the extremely fluid and uncertain fiscal environment in the state of Nevada, information in the report would have been more timely had more recent developments, including, for example,
budget rescissions imposed by the Nevada System of Higher Education, been included as these so directly affect not only the financial condition of the University but also its overall administration.

Eligibility Requirements

The University of Nevada Las Vegas appears to meet all of the provisions of the Commission’s Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation and Accredited Higher Education Institutions.

Standard One
Institutional Mission and Goals, Planning and Effectiveness

Few public institutions of higher education in this country have experienced a trajectory of growth as rapid and dramatic as has the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). From its founding in 1957 by the Nevada Board of Regents, as the “Southern Division of the University of Nevada,” the University has expanded in every sense of the term: programs, faculty, enrollment, budget, research, services, campus footprint, public outreach, and reputation. Today, fifty-three years after its establishment, UNLV is a research intensive university that now finds itself needing to reexamine its scope of operations in the face of the unprecedented financial challenges that beset the State of Nevada, itself one of the states hardest hit by the recent economic downturn. The university community, under the leadership of its new president, and with the support of the Board of Regents of the Nevada System of Higher Education, is reviewing all aspects of its operations in light of its Mission Statement.

Following a year-long planning process, the Mission Statement of UNLV was approved by the Board of Regents in 2008 and remains today the key component of the institution’s overall strategic plan, “Focus: 50 to 100 – Celebrating 50 Years and Planning the Future.” The Mission Statement is widely publicized, including on the university’s website, and serves as the backdrop for planning, budgetary allocations, ongoing institutional assessment, and subsequent adjustments. Implementation of the strategic plan is guided by a prioritized list of action items that was developed by faculty, students, and staff and addresses the specific areas of education, research, infrastructure, and faculty selection. The Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning (IAP) was established to identify peer institutions, set benchmarks, and generate metrics by which the university could monitor progress with respect to these priorities.

With the sudden departure of the previous president and the rapidly worsening fiscal situation in Nevada, it was critical that the new president clarify both the timely priorities of the institution as well as the processes by which they would be executed. In his first State of the University Address (Fall 2009), the president set out steps by which, in spite of the current budget challenges, UNLV would remain true to its values of (a) providing high-quality undergraduate and graduate education; (2) pursuing its research mission; and (3) remaining responsive to its community. At the same time, recognizing imminent budget reductions (owing to declining state revenues), the president directed the Joint Evaluation Team JET) to identify programs for elimination, reorganization, or modification. The
process was a consultative one that kept the campus apprised of its work through a website. Criteria employed in the work of the JET were consistent with the Mission Statement and included “Program Quality and Scholarly Output Indicators,” “Program Support and End Indicators,” “Efficiency and Effectiveness Indicators,” and “Fit to Mission.” A comparable set of criteria was brought to bear on administrative unit evaluations. This process will bring to the president a set of specific recommendations and it is expected final action will be taken by the end of the current academic year.

It was the evaluation committee’s experience that few members of the UNLV community below the level of the deans were able to cite the Mission Statement with any specificity (despite its wide publication). But at the same time, virtually all parties acknowledged the centrality of teaching, research, and public service outreach, the importance of UNLV remaining faithful to its role regionally, state-wide, and beyond, and the urgent need to adjust programs and services to current and foreseeable financial realities while not compromising the university’s future options. The committee observed also an uncommonly high morale among faculty, students, and staff (with some exceptions, certainly) given the fiscal outlook, as well as a widespread confidence in the ability of the new president to lead the charting of a revised course for the institution.

Finally, as set forth in his 2009 State of the University address, the president clearly linked the university’s decennial accreditation exercise to the implementation of the institution’s strategic plan. The preparation of the self-study brought the work of the Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning into better articulation with ongoing program review and budgetary allocation processes as well as to the generation of data to document the accreditation preparation. In the committee’s judgment, this linkage, itself desirable, is likely to continue.

Whatever the results of the current strategic adjustments, however, it will be critically important that the priorities of the university and those of the Board of Regents be aligned. Given the role of the University of Nevada Reno, as well as those of its sister institutions regionally (the Nevada State College and the College of Southern Nevada) it will be essential that issues such as institutional funding models and program allocation be clarified at the system level. Ambiguity of funding prospects should not be compounded by ambiguity of mission.

Standard Two
Educational Program and Its Effectiveness

Introduction

The University has in place policies and procedures to create, monitor, and renew the educational program of the institution. These policies are consistent with the University’s mission as currently stated, provide basic curriculum standards, and place the core responsibility for the development and renewal of programs and courses with the appropriate academic faculty, program and college. Oversight and approval reside initially within the college and schools with final approval at the Senior Vice Provost
for Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate New Program Committee, and the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents.

Procedures for the creation of new programs of study and courses are in place. Programs are reviewed according to NSHE Board of Regents policy, and new programs are reviewed after the third and fifth year. Data are available regarding enrollment and graduation.

University policy states that learning outcomes for all undergraduate and graduate programs and assessment plans be developed by the faculty in the appropriate discipline. While not yet truly university wide in application, assessment mechanisms have seen significant progress since the 2007 report. Degree and certification programs requirements are identified; however, student-learning outcomes are not available for all programs and courses and wide variation exists within and across academic units. Instruction and assessment are the responsibility of appropriate faculty. Credits per hour of instruction and length of instructional periods are established by University policy; however, within individual programs variation may occur as well as tuition costs.

Policies for awarding and transfer of academic credit are present in the Undergraduate Catalog and on the University website. Specific policies regarding prior experiential learning are in place and consistent with Commission policy. Except in specifically identified cases, the University does not grant credit for prior experiential learning. These cases are clearly identified.

The University’s academic program is supported by 775 tenure track faculty and other non-tenured faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants. Individual colleges monitor the qualifications of the teaching faculty. Policies are in place regarding promotion and tenure across the colleges and schools. **Physical and financial resources are generally adequate. However, all units must seek continually to maximize current resources and seek out other sources of revenue.**

University oversight of Graduate Programs and Graduate Faculty resides in the Office of the Vice President of Research and Graduate Dean. Policies and procedures for admission and graduation are consistent with the University’s overall mission.

The University’s Division of Educational Outreach has restructured to better meet the needs of the University’s mission and has established effective partnerships across the University and with external constituents. A varied set of programs and methods of delivery ensure the Division of its continued outreach to the citizens of Nevada.

**College of Business**

The quality of the UNLV College of Business undergraduate and graduate degree programs is demonstrated through accreditation by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSBI). Other indicators of the quality of the business degree programs include external rankings of the degree programs by both numerical analysis and peer reputation surveys, ranking of
faculty research in a number of business disciplines, along with high employer demand for graduates of the business programs.

Strengths of the college as perceived by faculty and administrators include:

- Competitive positioning based on unique characteristics of the community including entrepreneurship, sustainability and real estate
- Growth of strategic research programs regarding sustainability in both resource economics and supply chain management
- Development of a faculty research reward/compensation system based on journal tier
- Success in recruiting new faculty with greater research potential and demonstrated performance
- Creation of new global partnerships in China and Japan
- Improvements in the national ranking of faculty research productivity

The UNLV College of Business participates in the campus-wide academic assessment program, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the department. The leading departments identify learning outcomes for their degree programs, develop assessment measures for each learning outcome, set performance targets for each measure, review bi-annual semester assessment reports for all degree programs and make program improvements on a continuous basis as suggested by the assessment outcomes. **The other departments participate in the campus academic assessment program to a lesser degree, typically collecting and submitting assessment data for learning outcomes as required by the campus plan, but not following up with discussion of the data and improvement of their program.**

Examples of program improvements directly related to the review and discussion of assessment measures of learning outcomes in the College of Business include the following:

- MIS – scanning of changing external environment indicated need for curricular improvement regarding off-shoring and out-sourcing; validated by advisory board members; changes included the addition of these topics to the curriculum
- MKTG – weakness in student “depth of knowledge” regarding consumer behavior was highlighted by student performance on semester assessment exams; response included the creation of new written case studies.
- ECON – weakness in student analysis highlighted by performance on semester assessment exams; response was increased writing requirements in Econ
- ACCT – CPA exam performance of accounting students indicated a relative weakness in the area of accounting law; response was to move the law courses from the finance area into the accounting department; student performance on the law portion improved

Anecdotal discussions with students indicated that their expectations regarding the quality of UNLV College of Business degree programs have been satisfied or exceeded. Many students gave personal examples of business instructors who provided high value-added instruction. The business students also indicated overall satisfaction with the general education courses taken at UNLV. This group of students
indicated that the quality of instruction and the level of rigor at UNLV were generally better than expected since their expectations were low due to the legacy reputation of UNLV as a “big two year school that grants four year degrees.”

One concern raised by business students was the inconsistent level of quality regarding on-line courses. They specifically indicated that some on-line instructors were unresponsive and unavailable.

Faculty: Interviews with UNLV College of Business faculty and administrators across all levels suggested a few major themes.
1. Satisfaction with the campus-wide emphasis on becoming a very high research institution.
2. Confidence and trust in the current UNLV president.
3. Anxiety regarding recent fiscal difficulties.
4. Eagerness to move forward and put economic problems behind them.

Untenured faculty expressed satisfaction with the mentoring processes regarding promotion and tenure policies and procedures. All faculty indicated confidence in current curriculum planning and development processes.

Nearly all concerns expressed by faculty of all ranks were related to decreases in resources concurrent with increases in work-load demands. Part-time instructors have largely been eliminated from the college resulting in larger class sizes for the remaining tenure-track faculty. Larger teaching obligations associated with doubling or tripling class sizes have been accompanied by increased research expectations associated with the campus-wide strategic initiative to earn the very high research designation. Finally, budget cuts have included dramatic reductions in the number of graduate research assistants and with salary reductions for untenured faculty, administrators and support staff.

Job security is especially fragile in the MIS area which has been listed as one of a few departments eligible for elimination if the fiscal situation becomes worse. The general sense of economic uncertainty is heightened as time passes and nothing definite is announced.

**College of Hotel Administration**

The quality of the UNLV College of Hotel Administration undergraduate and graduate degree programs is demonstrated through independent national rankings. Other indicators of the quality of the Hotel Administration degree programs include national ranking of faculty research in a number of disciplines, along with high employer demand for graduates of the Hotel Administration programs.

Strengths of the college as perceived by faculty and administrators include:
- New international campus in Singapore
- Harrah’s $30 million gift, $5 million for research, $25 million for ½ of new building
- External #1 program ranking
• Successful recruitment of new research active faculty
• New, innovative program in Sports Management

The UNLV College of Hotel Administration participates in the campus-wide academic assessment program to a limited but growing degree depending on the department. Nearly all departments collect and submit assessment data for learning outcomes as required by the campus plan, but are not following up with discussion of the data and improvement of their degree programs. The attitude to some degree seems to be that they have the expertise themselves and do not need to participate in the campus program. Since their programs are rated #1 or #2 in the nation by many independent rating institutions it may be that they assume that additional validation of program quality is unnecessary.

Examples of program improvements directly related to review and discussion of assessment measures of learning outcomes in the College of Hotel Administration include the following:
• To measure a portion of the learning outcomes the Food & beverage program uses student performance on the Professional Sanitation Exam with a target pass level of 75%; 90% of their students currently meet this standard; based on student performance course content has been adjusted to address weak areas of performance
• In the Sports Management Program (golf) a portion of the learning outcomes is measured using the PGA assessment, including the player aptitude test (PAT) requiring a golf score of 72. 94% of students pass this rigorous requirement

Anecdotal discussions with students indicated that their expectations regarding the quality of UNLV College of Hotel Administration degree programs have been satisfied or exceeded. Many students gave personal examples of Hotel Administration instructors who provided high value-added instruction. Hotel Administration students expressed mixed levels of satisfaction with the general education courses taken at UNLV. Since about 80% of Hotel Administration students are transfer students it is likely that not many of this group have personal experience with the entire UNLV general education requirements. This group of students indicated that the quality of instruction and the level of rigor at UNLV were generally better than expected since their expectations were low due to the legacy reputation of UNLV as being equivalent to a two year school.

Consensus was expressed regarding the very high reputation of the UNLV College of Hotel Administration degree programs. Common themes included:
1. Very tight integration of the College of Hotel Administration with the local hospitality industry. The integration of work and school was very highly valued.
2. National rankings of the Hotel Administration programs.
3. Many students knew peers or relatives who graduated from the UNLV Hotel College who provided glowing recommendations.
4. Many successful mid-level managers where the students worked were college graduates who gave positive recommendations for the College of Hotel Administration programs.
One concern raised by Hotel Administration students was problems with transferring of general education credits from other accredited institutions including the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of California-Irvine. Follow-up conversations with the college Director of Advising revealed that this transfer problem has been addressed in the past few years.

Interviews with UNLV College of Hotel Administration faculty and administrators across all levels suggested a few major themes.

1. Satisfaction with the campus-wide emphasis on becoming a very high research institution.
2. Confidence and trust in the current UNLV president.
3. Anxiety regarding recent fiscal difficulties.
4. Eagerness to move forward and put economic problems behind them.

Untenured faculty expressed satisfaction with the mentoring processes regarding promotion and tenure policies and procedures. All faculty indicated confidence in current curriculum planning and development processes.

Nearly all concerns expressed by faculty of all ranks were related to decreases in resources concurrent with increases in work-load demands. Part-time instructors have largely been eliminated from the college resulting in larger class sizes for the remaining tenure-track faculty. Larger teaching obligations associated with growing class sizes have been accompanied by increased research expectations as part of the campus-wide strategic initiative to earn the very high research designation. Finally, budget cuts have included dramatic reductions in the number of graduate research assistants and with salary reductions for untenured faculty, administrators and support staff.

Job security is especially fragile in the Sports Management area which has been listed as one of a few departments eligible for elimination if the fiscal situation becomes worse. The general sense of economic uncertainty is heightened as time passes and nothing definite is announced.

**College of Education**

The College of Education, consisting of the departments of counselor education, curriculum and instruction, educational leadership, special education, and sports education and leadership, is ending a cycle of increased student enrollment due to the demand for educators in Nevada’s schools. During this same period, the College has also attempted to respond to the University's call for increased graduate education and faculty research productivity. Currently the College is lead by an interim dean who has a two-year appointment. A conceptual educational framework, developed by the faculty, serves as a guide for the instructional, research, and service mission and is consistent with the overall mission of the University.
The College of Education’s programs are based on standards established by national education accreditation agencies such as the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Council of School Psychologists (NASP), and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). These, and other national organizations, provide intellectual yardsticks by which faculty judge the overall effectiveness of their programs. The application of national standards to programs was, in part, a response to NWCCU’s 2000 recommendation that the College establish a more systematic assessment of its programs. These learning outcomes are consistent with NWCCU’s Standard 2.

The College provides an undergraduate degree in elementary and secondary teacher education, special education, human services counseling, physical education, and workforce education. Each of these programs may be reviewed by national accrediting agencies in 2011. Each has a set of clearly articulated learning outcomes and goals. Master’s degrees and the PhD and/or EdD are offered across all academic areas. Each of these degrees conforms to the University’s policies regarding undergraduate and graduate studies.

Program and curriculum responsibilities reside in appropriate academic faculty and faculty meet each semester to review the College’s strategic plan and to discuss specific changes that need to be made in programs and courses. Faculty are currently engaged in aligning the curriculum of both the undergraduate and graduate programs using data from various assessment instruments. Discussions are also being held as how best to organize the college in order to better serve students, programs, faculty teaching and research interests, and in light of the current financial situation calling for a reduction in costs.

The College, responding to NWCCU’s recommendations and current thinking in the field of educator preparation, has established collaborative partnerships between campus teacher education programs and the P-12 schools in Clark County in order to align the curriculum better to the needs of the public schools. The College’s 21st Century Teacher Preparation Schools serves as the vehicle for this effort involving three professional development schools. In addition, the College has a number of centers and clinics linking it to the P-12 school system and the community.

The College provides assessment reports in accordance with the University’s assessment policies. The College’s efforts, however, go beyond the University’s requirements. Student learning outcomes have developed for each course, a variety of assessment instruments created and field tested, and a data analysis system is being developed. The teacher education and special education programs, in particular, are exemplary in their systematic collection of student data throughout the students’ experience. Faculty meet regularly to review data, discuss program and course outcomes and program articulation. The college is also exploring the use of LiveText and college-developed software to manage data in order to make better decisions regarding program and course renewal. The College’s efforts in using student outcome data to renewal programs can serve as models for other units of the University.
Admission into both the undergraduate and graduate programs follows University policy. Students are advised at the College of Education Undergraduate Advising Center. Professional staff advises over 300 students per month. Graduate students work with appropriate faculty in the academic areas. The enrollment in the teacher education has dropped due to increased academic admission requirements and the dramatic decline in the need for new teachers in Clark County. Faculty are using this opportunity to establish stronger ties with the public school system and to review the curriculum. The goal, once focused on preparing large numbers of teachers, is to increase the quality of preparation via a stronger curriculum and collaboration with partner schools. Master’s degree programs enroll over 1,100 students and the doctoral headcount, which has increased over the past five years, was 303 in 2009. A challenge for the college will be to maintain the balance between a large undergraduate program that requires intensive collaboration with P-12 schools and graduate programs that require a significant amount of faculty time.

Faculty are engaged in teaching, research, and outreach. A number have national leadership roles in their respective disciplines and the College hosts four national education journals and several outreach and service centers. Programs have sufficient faculty; however, areas of needed expertise include science and mathematics education. As the College seeks to enhance its research productivity, attention will be needed to the infrastructure needed to support such initiatives.

The administrative structure in the Dean’s Office is appropriate. The dean and associate deans are interim. A search for a new dean is tentatively set for next fall; however, due to a number of factors the search may not take place. The college has a history of turnover at the dean’s position, and as a result has been lead by a series of interim deans. Faculty appear to have adjusted to the revolving door situation through strong departmental leadership and a willingness to work together to enhance programs and the college’s reputation locally and nationally. Interim deans come from the faculty so there is a sense that mission and college goals may be maintained.

The College’s physical plant is adequate for its mission and has an excellent curriculum library and computer facilities for students. Reductions in staffing have not dramatically impacted the work of the college. A technology support office provides services the College’s technology needs, and a faculty member sits on the University Information Technology Coordination Committee.

The College is adjusting to the changing financial situation by making staff adjustments, reviewing the departmental organizational structure, and reviewing selected programs annually. At this time, faculty are awaiting decisions from the President’s office regarding the University’s mission and the status of the dean’s search.

**College of Engineering**

The institution’s commitment to becoming a research extensive institution is embraced by the leadership of the College of Engineering and the faculty. The faculty are committed to student learning
and display a pride in their institution and a desire to see their students succeed. The resources appear to be in place to make this happen.

The College’s mission and goals are aligned with and supportive of those of the institution. The degree programs in the College of Engineering include a mix of traditional engineering programs and niche programs that are relevant to the regional economy. The cooperation of the College of Engineering and the College of Fine Arts in developing the B.S. in Entertainment Engineering and Design indicates an interest in responding to the needs of the region as well as a willingness to work outside of strict disciplinary boundaries. The Army and Air Force ROTC units are housed in the College as well. Differential tuition rates are not in use for Engineering at the present time, but are under discussion by the faculty. During difficult financial times a differential tuition could help alleviate institutional concerns over the higher cost of engineering programs. Lab fees have been introduced and are used to provide an enhanced educational experience for the students.

The process for updating curricula and programs involves numerous reviews, but faculty indicate that they can make changes to their programs in a timely manner. Evidence of recent program and curriculum changes indicates that the faculty are engaged in periodic review of their programs. The creation of EGG 103L and 104L courses to engage students in the engineering program and assist with comprehension of mathematics demonstrate that the faculty are assessing and responding to student needs.

A conscious effort is made to schedule courses to accommodate the needs of the students, many of whom are working while attending school.

The institution has in place a policy requiring program review once every ten years. It is clear that the College leadership and faculty consider this review to be substantive and a part of the institution’s strategic planning process.

One of the College’s programs (Construction Engineering Management) was recently reviewed and accredited by an outside accrediting agency. Several other programs are scheduled for accreditation site visits this fall. Regular program assessment is assured for these programs. However some programs, such as the Entertainment Engineering program, do not have an outside accrediting agency. The College is working with the State licensing board to allow graduates of the program to be licensed in the State of Nevada. This process is a good initial program review step, but the College will need to develop a plan to periodically review its non-accredited programs.

Program objectives for nearly all Engineering programs are listed in the undergraduate catalog; the exception is the Entertainment Engineering program. It is anticipated that the College will fix this omission soon.
The College faculty provided examples of how program assessment has led to course and program improvement. For example, student deficiencies in mathematics are a primary reason for delays in progressing through the curriculum. Students who are not prepared for Calculus I are unable to start the engineering sequence of courses. This not only delays their progress through the curriculum, but keeps the students out of engineering courses and out of touch with their chosen major. The College responded by instituting a new course for students who are behind in mathematics. This course provides recitation support for the early math courses and an introduction to engineering to engage the students in the curriculum.

The College participates in the institution’s general education core requirements. The State of Nevada has a common course numbering system to facilitate transfer of course credits between State institutions.

The institution has established advising centers in each College. The Engineering faculty stressed that these centers focus on course scheduling and that professional mentoring is still a faculty role. Students reported satisfaction with the advising centers.

The College appears to be adequately staffed for the programs offered. Concern was expressed by some faculty that the teaching loads make it difficult to have the research productivity that is becoming required for promotion and tenure, however the prevailing opinion was that getting the research done is a challenge, but it can be accomplished with the current teaching loads.

The level and nature of the graduate programs in the College of Engineering are consistent with the mission of the institution and its goal of becoming a research extensive institution. The degree requirements indicate a significantly greater depth of study than the undergraduate curricula. The institution has invested in research programs, most recently with the construction of the new Science and Engineering Building. However faculty still report that the infrastructure for research is not all that it needs to be.

The requirements for advanced degrees are listed in the graduate catalog and meet the requirements of the Commission. New graduate programs have been added recently, but the rate of adding programs has fallen due to significant fiscal problems. The most recent addition to the College’s graduate programs (Informatics) fills a niche and complements a new undergraduate program. The faculty are sufficient in number and have appropriate terminal degrees for the programs offered.

**College of Science**

The institution’s commitment to becoming a research extensive institution is embraced by the leadership of the College of Sciences and the faculty. The faculty are committed to student learning and display a pride in their institution and a desire to see their students succeed. The resources have been in place to make this happen.
The College’s mission and goals are aligned with and supportive of those of the institution. The undergraduate degree programs in the College of Sciences are predominantly classical science majors. The degree designations are reasonable and coherent.

Degree objectives for all undergraduate programs are listed in the undergraduate catalog, with varying levels of detail. Additional detail in the degree objectives in the areas of Mathematical Sciences, and Physics and Astronomy would help guide the assessment and program review efforts in those areas. Evidence was provided that some program review is underway. The reorganization of the Biological Sciences Department into the School of Life Sciences is evidence that the College is responding to changes in the state of the science of biology as well as student demand for the life sciences majors. It is clear from these actions that faculty in the College are responsible for reviewing and revising curricula. The faculty expressed a strong interest in getting students interested in science by participating in research. This is highly commendable.

The institution has in place a policy requiring program review once every ten years. These reviews require significant preparation by the Departments, but may or may not receive the benefit of external review due to budget limitations. While there is significant value to external review, an expanded internal assessment program would be of benefit to the Departments in the long term. The B.S. in Chemistry program is accredited by the American Chemical Society, however it appears that this accreditation is inputs-based rather than outcomes-based. While there is significant value to such an accreditation program, it cannot replace the outcomes assessment required by the Commission. Educational assessment has been a priority of the institution for a decade, but in many ways it has not yet been fully adopted or implemented by the Departments in the College of Sciences. There is a common sentiment among department chairs that the collection of assessment data is a mandated but time-consuming chore, and the collected data have little or no utility for program or course improvement. It is noted that this view is not shared at the Dean’s level.

The creation of learning outcomes for all courses has been mandated by the institution, but faculty compliance is uneven. When learning objectives are provided, assessment of whether or not the learning objectives have been met may or may not be performed.

It is apparent that a culture of educational assessment has not yet been fully developed in the College of Sciences. There are some hopeful signs, however: some faculty expressed an interest in learning how to do this assessment, and the institution does provide periodic assessment training. A focus on closing the loop – on how to use assessment data to improve courses and programs – would be useful.

The College faculty did provide examples of how assessment is being used:

- The Geoscience faculty are participating in and NSF-sponsored program review project and are making significant revisions to their curriculum.
• The department chair and undergraduate coordinator in Mathematics have started the process of assessing student performance and course content in the pre-calculus courses.
• The Chemistry department uses standardized tests provided by the American Chemical Society in some courses. The results allow the department to see how their students are performing relative to national averages.

These assessments are highly laudable, but these efforts do not replace a systematic program of outcomes assessment across the entire curriculum. They can, however, be very useful components of a more comprehensive assessment program.

The College participates in the institution’s general education core requirements. The State of Nevada has a common course numbering system to facilitate transfer of course credits between State institutions. The institution has established advising centers in each College and students report satisfaction with the advising centers.

The College is to be commended for significant efforts to involve undergraduates in research. As one example, the College has combined several REU and related summer research programs and created a very exciting research experience for 50+ participants. The program includes instruction, laboratory research, activities, and an opportunity to present their results.

The level and nature of the graduate programs in the College of Science are consistent with the mission of the institution and its goal of becoming a research extensive institution. The degree requirements indicate a significantly greater depth of study than the undergraduate curricula. The requirements for advanced degrees are listed in the graduate catalog and meet the requirements of the Commission. The institution has invested in research programs, most recently with the construction of the new Science and Engineering Building. The faculty see the College as the campus leader in research.

The College has been conservative in adding new graduate programs; this may prove a wise decision as the institution works through its current financial crisis. The most recent addition to the College’s graduate programs (Ph.D. Mathematics) affords all faculty in the College the opportunity to participate in doctoral-level graduate education.

The number of faculty has been reduced in recent years due to hiring freezes, and the current faculty are stretched thin. When the faculty numbers are restored, they will be sufficient in number and for the programs offered. The current faculty can cover the required courses for a time, but current loads probably cannot be sustained indefinitely without significantly compromising the College’s ability to meet its research goals.

College of Fine Arts

The College of Fine Arts offers a comprehensive range of degrees in the fine arts both the liberal arts focused BA/BS and the professionally focused Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Music, as well as professional graduate programs in Architecture, Fine Arts, Theater, and Music. These offering are
consistent with the mission of the institution and the College to serve both the general population and those interested in pursuing specialized degree offerings. Disciplinary accreditation bodies have oversight of Architecture, Interior Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Art, Music and Theatre. There is a strong history and pride of artistic and creative achievements, particularly in the traditional arts forms as well as architecture, and a realization that to be relevant offerings in film and graphic design are both attractive to students and meaningful for the community.

While chairs and faculty offer support for the Dean and administration and feel that communication is clear and timely there is an overall inertia in planning. The Dean has created a decentralized leadership system placing responsibilities at the department level. While recognizing that the situation is critical, strategies for focusing current resources are fraught with lack of ability to determine how future resources will be allocated. Will a drop in credit hours create further cuts? Should focus be on majors or general education?

Concern that the emphasis on the research mission will leave out units that do not have grants, are not seen as providing a resource for the region, or are not viewed as “traditional research”. In the competitive award of centralized GA positions the College received one award in Architecture.

The college has 24 vacant frozen positions. The Dean reports that at present the college is able to maintain both the quality of its offerings and its ability to serve the number of currently enrolled students and that further cuts will erode either quality or numbers of student served. Department chairs and faculty believe that the point of erosion has occurred. Increases in class sizes, and less frequent offerings have impacted both quality and the ability for students to make progress to graduation. There is a sense that a lack of access to student data impedes the ability to accurately report on this. Many faculty teach a 4-4 load with large class sizes and report this seriously impinges of their time for other obligations such as assessment and creative activity. Untenured faculty are concerned that these large class sizes will affect their student evaluations and seriously impact their tenure and promotions cases.

Programs where vacancies have occurred are seen as “low hanging fruit” for vertical cuts, this includes the Landscape Architecture Department (a strong program that just received the maximum number of years of disciplinary accreditation) and the new Entertainment Engineering Design program that is jointly offered by Engineering and Art. Gerontology is also a potential area for cut (certificate only), located in the College of Arts and Architecture both by virtue of some specialized program options in senior adult theater and specialized dance therapy and efficiencies with specific faculty who have historically been connected with the program, the certificate intersects with 14 other programs on campus. The perceptions is that there is not a clear set of logic applied to the program cuts and they seem to be based on current productivity and cost rather than potential for extramural funding and the ability to serve the students and community in areas with tremendous synergy.

There is a strong culture of entrepreneurship to seek external funding and most units have been working in creative ways with fee based projects, sponsored projects, arts/performance tickets that have series subscriptions etc. While these are all providing opportunities for students and the
communities they are often at odds with the university support systems to the point that may place projects in jeopardy.

**The College of Fine Arts** should be praised for the vital role they play in the cultural life of Las Vegas. Their creative outreach and partnerships have provided unique opportunities for students and have brought the citizens of the region closer to the University. Emerging activities through the Downtown Design Center in conjunction with departments across UNLV, the city and the profession is an exemplar.

**College of Liberal Arts**

The committee noted strong support for the leadership provided by the Dean and Associate Dean of the College. They have made excellent and creative use of resources, keeping clear focus on both the teaching and research mission of the Unit and the Institution. This is an especially commendable effort as the College encompasses the humanities, social sciences (a total of 9 departments), the interdisciplinary degree programs, has four centers, and offers the bulk of the general education offerings.

Despite budget pressures the College of Liberal Arts has done an excellent job of assuring that the general education offerings (largely concentrated in the college) are available in the numbers and at the quality level that serves the students and the institution.

*The College has over 34 vacant lines that are frozen and currently has protected lower division offerings through smart enrollment management, increased class sizes where possible, and increased use of GTA (UNLV policy that 80% of GA time be dedicated to student credit hour generation related activity), while reducing PTI budgets over the past two years from $4ml to $3ml annually.*

**Upper division offerings and graduate programs** have born the brunt of the budget reductions with even some top tier programs (MFA in Creative writing ranked 5th in innovative/creative programs 2007 by Atlantic Monthly Magazine) significantly understaffed.

In 2008 University College was dissolved and the programs of study incorporated in the College of Liberal Arts. The BS in University Studies was sunset (with a two year window of degree completion). The College has done an excellent job of absorbing these students. The Director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program has successful matriculated 350 of the 400 majors in progress and anticipates most others to be complete by the cutoff date of summer 2010, the remaining students will complete the degree with individualized program agreements. Interdisciplinary Degrees, an offshoot of the University College, also under the purview of the Director and the college, are a growing and exciting area of study. However, they are dependent on a wide range of faculty, across the Institution, as volunteer mentors to oversee the capstone requirements. With increased expectations for all faculty as this time, recruiting mentors is a growing concern.
The college has instituted centralized advising through the Wilson Advising Center. Through required and regular advising they have helped students navigate changes in offerings etc. Department chairs report working collaboratively with the advising center and faculty sees the center as a valuable partner.

Morale of department chairs is high and they report that faculty have pulled together during this time period. However, in the untenured faculty there is considerable concern over job security and disappointment that they have not enjoyed the record of merit pay previously the norm at the institution.

As the institution increase the visibility of research there is concern that the humanities are less competitive for research resources (in the centralization of GA positions that were earmarked for research and awarded competitively they received no awards). There is also concern that the research conducted in the humanities does not fit with a mission that targets research relevant to the area.

The University mandate to have 80% of GA time dedicated to student credit hour generation related activity is a significant detriment to attracting and retaining excellent graduate students. UNLV will not be as competitive as Universities with graduate research positions. As a result of the policy and the great increases in the number of untrained GAs in the classroom, there is concern over the impact on the programs (Psychology has created a successful GA teacher training course).

**College of Liberal Arts should be praised for the significant number of research and teaching awards and recognition of their faculty and students.**

**Honors College**

The Dean is the only full time faculty administrator in Honors. With support staff and advisors the administrative, advising and support needs of the students are addressed. Faculty hold the Dean in high esteem. He single handedly assures the quality and breadth of the program.

The Honors College is extremely competitive in attracting students against nationally recognized program. 80% of students continue to graduate programs. The scholarly achievements of the students are extremely noteworthy (including a Truman Scholar) and the College is commended for the rich and challenging range of research topics and approaches of both its faculty and students.

Honors has become increasingly selective and now admits roughly 50% of applicants, through a process that requires admission to UNLV prior to admission to the College. The recent migration of student data to a new system has created some difficulties in tracking admitted students.

The College has no permanent faculty and uses a system of buy-outs to provide compensation to the home units of faculty who teach in the program, SCH accrues to the home department. This system has been successful where there is support from Deans and Department Chairs but is proving to be an escalating challenge given the increasing demands on faculty and the need for faculty to teach large sections of students in their home departments. Additional challenge is created by the inability to buy-
out science faculty with the allocated course funding or with small incentives, as a result Honor’s sciences course have moved from requirement to options.

There is an impressive cadre of faculty, many who have taught loyally in Honors since its inception in 1985. The program also relies on 50-60 volunteer mentors per year to work with students on their thesis, an increasingly challenging arrangement.

Assessment is an area of great concern. This is particularly problematic as the Honors curriculum also provides the general education requirement for Honor’s students. While there are clear learning outcomes and a detailed plan was created in 2005 it was not implemented. There is an overall paucity of assessment data with the last report posted in 2007. The data available focuses on faculty impressions of students and student exit interviews. The Dean reports that specific assessment methodologies are just emerging in Honors and that plans to use the thesis as a student work sample were judged as untenable due to the mastery of the final product. Further issues that challenge the ability to conduct regular assessment is the lack of dedicated honor’s faculty.

**Division of Health Sciences**

The Division of Health Sciences at UNLV includes four schools. They are the schools of Allied Health Sciences (SAHS), Dental Medicine (SDM), Community Health Sciences (SCHS) and Nursing (SON). Although organized on paper under the division heading, they each function as autonomous entities, have separate missions, separate budgets, unique organizational structures and are headed by deans who report directly to the provost. There are a few shared services, e.g., three schools share an advising center, etc. Also the dean of the SON is the dean of the SAHS and in that relationship an associate dean for research and research support staff are shared between those schools. For the most part, however, the schools only interface on a limited basis. Additionally, the SDN is located entirely on a separate campus.

It appears that the parts of the university understand the structure, however, various individuals have referred to these schools as colleges while other entities treat them as a single unit, e.g., the division has five senators but only four schools. Externally, this titling may not be clear or fully understood and may be a factor in how other colleges and universities view the health sciences at UNLV. Additionally, as the university continues to emphasize its research focus and the schools increasingly pursue extramural funding, this lack of clarity may be a negative factor, particularly with agencies such as NIH and the CDC.

The committee respectfully suggests that the university administration review the structure of the Division of Health Sciences and clarify its status and/or change the designation of these schools to colleges as well as recommend such changes to the appropriate university and state entities, a move that may further the mission of the schools and increase their competitiveness in the marketplace and with federal agencies.
School of Allied Health Sciences

The School of Allied Health Sciences (SAHS) provides undergraduate and graduate programs in a number of disciplines, conducts basic and applied research, and performs public service related to the improvement of health care delivery. It recently underwent a number of organizational changes. The dean of the school is also the dean of the school of nursing and several positions including the associate dean for research are shared positions. This arrangement is working very well and the plan is for it to continue. Within the school there are three departments: Health Physics and Diagnostic Sciences includes Clinical Laboratory Sciences and Radiography; Kinesiology and Nutrition Sciences which also includes Athletic Training; and third, Physical Therapy. At the end of the fall semester 2009, there were 1307 (783 FTEs) students which translates to approximately 1149 undergraduate students, 72 masters students and 86 doctoral students (mostly physical therapy students). Gender and diversity are fairly well balanced. There are 30 faculty and two vacant faculty lines with one more opening at the end of May. There is fairly good gender balance but a lack in minorities. Eighteen faculty are tenured, eight are on tenure tracks and the rest are lecturers and faculty-in-residence. The school is located in the Bigelow Health Sciences Building, a ten year old facility that is fairly adequate for its needs although some renovation and upgrades in equipment are needed.

SAHS offers seven undergraduate degree programs, three masters programs, a D.P.T. (Doctor of Physical Therapy) and a Ph.D. in Radiochemistry (jointly with chemistry). With the exception of Kinesiology which has no professional accreditation process available, all these programs are currently accredited by their respective professional accrediting organizations and the outcomes of these degree programs have been developed to be in line with the requirements of those agencies. Graduates do very well on their licensing examinations with passage rates of first time takers well above national averages. Of note is that for the fifth consecutive year, a UNLV radiography graduate earned the highest score in the nation on the professional licensing examination. Regular program assessment is in place and feedback from that process, which includes input from students and a range of other sources, is used to improve programs and/or make appropriate program changes.

Faculty research is primarily applied research in such areas as human performance and clinical practices. Recent progress has been made and currently the SAHS has about $1.5M in extramural funding. Other research activities such as presentations and publications are evident. Faculty, however, are finding that meeting the school and university research expectations is a struggle, particularly if they are teaching clinical courses. Service to the various professions and the community by both faculty and students is ongoing and increasing the community outreach in an organized fashion is a goal.

As a result of Nevada’s decreased budget, the school is being impacted because of its need for equipment and resources for building renovation. The biggest concern, however, relates to inadequate funding for new faculty positions and graduate assistants. Faculty to student ratios in most of these clinical practice disciplines are out of line, varying from 1:20 to 1:67.4. Some accrediting agencies, such as athletic training, dictate what the ratios should be (1:16) and the ideal across the programs would be in the range of 1:10 - 1:20. This is limiting admissions and affecting clinical experiences as well as
negatively impacting the time faculty have available for research. It has, of necessity, resulted in some creative class scheduling.

School of Community Health Sciences

The School of Community Health Sciences seeks to prepare graduates to meet the critical need for public health professionals in Nevada, across the nation and the world in a variety of areas. The hope is they will improve the health and quality of life in communities as well as eliminate health disparities through their work and applied research. The program provides a diverse education, practical educational experience and opportunities for community involvement. The SCHS has three departments: Environmental and Occupational Health; Health Care Administration and Policy; and Health Promotion. Several major facilities operated by the SCHS include: The Nevada Center for Environmental Health Surveillance; The Environment Health Laboratory, The Emerging Diseases Laboratory, The American Indian Research and Education Center; The Center for Health Disparities Research; and The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy. As a result the school has a wide range of relationships with other university and system units, as well as regional, national and international stakeholders who provide partnerships, funding, research collaborations and clinical experiences for undergraduate and graduate students. Educational programs offered include two undergraduate programs (health care administration and health promotion) and three master’s degrees (Master of Health Administration, Master of Education with a health focus and a Master of Public Health). A new joint Ph.D. in Public Health program with the SCHS at the University of Nevada in Reno has been approved and admitted its first students in fall 2009. The school holds several accreditations and has an upcoming accreditation visit by the Council of Education for Public Health for the MPH and the PhD in Public Health.

A number of changes are and will be taking place relative to programs offered as numbers of students and efficiencies within the school are evaluated. **One of these at the undergraduate level involves the health promotion track which has had a low enrollment for some time. It will be incorporated into a new BS in Public Health in the fall 2010.**

Undergraduate students in the SCHS numbered 125 in the fall of 2009 with 21 graduates in the previous academic year. Master degree headcount at the same time was 201 with 44 graduates in academic year 2008-09. Five PhD in Public Health students began in fall 2009 with the expectation of admitting nine in the fall 2010. In addition to the majors in the SCHS, several of the courses are approved to meet the requirements of the university core; thus the SCHS produced by the school are significantly greater than just those generated by its majors. Approximately three quarters of the students are female, not uncommon in this type of school. There are strong levels of diversity among the students. The school shares an advising center and staff with the SON and SAHS. The center is highly effective in both recruiting and advising as well as an asset to faculty as it has positively affected their workloads.

Eighteen full-time faculty teach 60% of the courses. Part-time approved faculty who are supervised by department chairs teach the other 40 percent of courses. Of the full time faculty, 12 are tenured, five
are on tenure tracks and one is a visiting professor. The percentage of females and minorities is low. The present ratio of full-time faculty to FTE students is about 1:18. Many faculty participate in community service efforts and professional organizations. A major concern of the school is finding funding for new and vacant full-time faculty positions, without which the school will be forced to limit growth of graduate students. However, recently the dean was able to fill two positions when approved for only one when she agreed to pay half the salary of each with the other half being funded from their own grants which they are bringing with them.

**Assessment efforts are ongoing but generally are conducted by departments due to the unique characteristics of each. Students as well as site preceptors are actively involved in the evaluation process.** An example of changes made due to assessment information was the dropping of the master's non-thesis option in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and the adding of a technical writing course to the curriculum.

Faculty research efforts are on track with faculty having received a number of grants. Currently the school has about $8M in extramural funding including the first competitive NIH grant the university has ever received. Most of the funded projects involve collaborations with area medical centers, health departments, and organizations. The SCHS also has been the recipient of a highly competitive award from the CDC, one of six awarded and the only one to a university, under the CDC's Healthy Homes Initiative. This initiative is a coordinated, comprehensive and holistic approach to eliminating and preventing diseases and injuries that result from housing-related hazards and deficiencies. The initial money received is a seed grant for development of a plan to provide training and tools to a wide range of health care and housing specialists across several of the western states, and it appears highly probable that it will be followed by a multimillion dollar award.

The school is located in the Bigelow Health Sciences Building. **Space is generally adequate to the school's needs and laboratory space is available in other buildings, however, there is no money or infrastructure in place to maintain the laboratories or upgrade equipment.**

**School of Dental Medicine**

The School of Dental Medicine (SDM), established in 1999, wishes to be a driving force in the improvement of the health of the citizens of Nevada through its unique programs of oral healthcare services, its excellent, integrated curriculum that incorporates varied teaching strategies, and its quality research and scholarship. The SDM is adequately housed in three buildings on the UNLV Shadow Lane Campus, eight miles from the main university, where its associated clinics accommodate more than 50,000 patient visits per year in 241 fully equipped dental operatories. There is a distinct focus in the curriculum on persons with special needs and the Shadow Lane clinic provides the appropriate building arrangements and equipment to accommodate these patients. Additionally, on this campus is the SDM's Patient Simulation Laboratory which is a state-of-the-art training center designed both for students and oral health practitioners. There are 80 stations in the lab that each contain fully functional, self-contained dental units and articulated mannequins which allow the safe non-invasive performance
of most technical procedures required in practice. It is also set up with internet, data ports and monitors to provide for faculty demonstrations and participation in active learning projects.

The SDM offers several programs: the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DDM); a postdoctoral program in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics (MS degree) with a three year residency which takes four residents per year for a total of 12 in the program; a two year postdoctoral certificate program in Pediatric Dentistry which accepted its first class of six students in August 2008; and a one year certificate general practice residency to which they admit six students a year. All programs are accredited by the appropriate professional accreditation bodies.

The largest program in the SDM awards the DDM degree (currently 320 students) and admits 75 new students each year from an applicant pool of 2400, the size of the class based on available laboratory space. It was noted that one of every five applicants to dental schools across the country applies to the SDM at UNLV. The classes tend to be about 40% women. Minority numbers are low but strategies have been implemented to address this issue. The first 70 students graduated in 2006. The retention rate per class is above 90%.

The school has a strong nationally recognized full-time faculty of 56 of whom one-third are women and eight are minorities which is above the national average. They also have about 56+ part-time faculty, many of whom are regional dentists who donate their time to the school because they enjoy teaching. The faculty-student ratio meets the accreditation requirements – in the laboratory setting, it is 1:6 or 1:8. In addition to their teaching, faculty are actively involved in research and the school has been successful in securing about $8 million in competitive grants and awards since its inception. The focus of this work is on basic biomedical research; clinical investigations including biomaterials; and population and health promotion sciences studies. Included is a robust program of student research, with some of the highest number of involved students of any U.S. dental school. Faculty are quite productive in making presentations, publishing and serving as officers and delegates for major dental and research organizations. Additionally, faculty and students are very involved in community outreach efforts that include providing pro bono services to many community programs, educating youth on the risk factors for oral cancer from tobacco use, and serving underserved areas through its clinics. A faculty practice plan has recently been implemented which provides 40% of the remuneration to the faculty member above their university salary and 60% to the school.

Assessment is an integral part of the SDM. They have in place a detailed evaluation plan that includes a range of student learning outcomes, graduation rates, licensing examination rates, alumni perceptions and other variables. They have an extensive plan for obtaining data from their students, faculty and clients. An example was shared of a clinical course that was requested by students so they could interact and treat more people of various ethnic backgrounds. A loosely structured course was developed that involved two Native American groups; however, based upon student feedback, the course was restructured in a way that better fit the schedules of both students and clients. Input from the school advisory board and all committees are also used to improve the quality of the program.
Budget concerns in the current environment are of concern to the SDM but do not appear to be as acute as in other areas of the university. Dentistry is funded separately from the general university by the state legislature and the funds go directly to the SDM dean. She indicated there have been some cuts and each vacant position is carefully evaluated. Staff members have been taking one furlough day a month. Maintenance and upgrading equipment is a continuous challenge. However, the school’s tuition has increased over the last couple of years and will continue to increase until it reaches the national average ($157,000 to about $177,000 for four years). Continuing education for practicing dentists provides some revenue. Also, funds are available from service to clients as well as from the newly developed faculty practice plan which is a promising revenue source.

**School of Nursing**

The School of Nursing's (SON) primary mission is to improve human health through developing scientific innovations in education, research and practice and has adopted the motto, "Shaping the Future of Nursing Today." Its largest role is the education of nurses at the undergraduate and graduate levels to meet the health care needs of Nevada and its graduates are recognized for their excellent preparation. The school is located in the Bigelow Health Sciences Building where there is, for the most part, adequate space to meet its current needs. Additionally, the Clinical Simulation Center of Las Vegas opened in Fall 2009 on the Shadow Lane campus, an incredible state-of-the-art facility shared with the University of Nevada School of Medicine and the Nevada State College School of Nursing. The dean was very instrumental in the renovation of this facility, developing the collaboration that put the center together, and working out the funding arrangements.

The school offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) and a Ph.D. in Nursing Program. The programs are fully accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education through 2014. The BSN program is a basic baccalaureate program that admits students to the major as juniors. Full-time students are able to complete the program in four semesters or 16 months. Forty-eight students are admitted three times per year from the pre-nursing major in a competitive process. In spring 2010, there are 393 full-time FTE pre-nursing students and 83 part time FTEs. FTEs in the nursing major are 161. Students in the major are 22% male and 50% minority. First time pass rates on the NCLEX-RN regularly run above the Nevada average and the pass rates of the last two classes have been 100%.

The school also has a collaborative relationship with Nevada State College (NSC) in an online RN to BSN completion program. The SON offers two of the BSN courses or, if the student meets graduate admission standards for an accelerated option for graduate courses, they may take six to nine credits of graduate coursework. NSC grants the BSN degree in this arrangement but the students taking graduate courses may continue on in the MSN program at UNLV. This collaborative project was funded in 2008 by a grant awarded to UNLV by HRSA.

Three master's tracks are offered on-line by the SON: Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP); Pediatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP); and a Nurse Educator Track. A PhD in Nursing program with an emphasis on
Preparing nurse educators was implemented in 2005 with eleven graduates as of May 2010. Total graduate numbers in spring 2010 are 120 master’s and 28 doctoral students. There is some diversity in the graduate programs: master’s - 15% male and 30% minority; doctoral - 0 male and 21% minority. Pass rates for nurse practitioners on national certification examinations regularly run 100%. Plans are to admit 17 to 25 FNP students for fall semester, 2010 from the pool of three applications for every position. No admissions will be made to the PNP program due to budget constraints. Seven nurse educator master’s students will be admitted. The SON also has collaborated with St. Jude College in the Philippines to offer an accelerated MSN degree for physicians to become Family Nursing Practitioners. This program will be discontinued in the fall 2010 when the last three students graduate. Due to the success of the PhD program a second option is being added titled, “Urban Sustainability: Health.” The first cohort of four students will be admitted in fall 2010.

As a result of a mandate by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, a task force has been working collaboratively with the University of Nevada, Reno to develop a Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP). The DNP program was recently approved by the Board of Regents and will be implemented in the fall 2010 with 10 to 14 students on each campus. Initially it will be a post master’s program with tracks for nurse executives and advanced practice nurses. The financing will be through extended studies and the cost for students will be $600 per credit hour. Each institution will teach half the courses and the degree will be awarded by the home school.

There are 35 faculty members in the SON and currently the faculty is 17% male and 7% minority. Male faculty members are being heavily recruited to address the imbalance. Faculty numbers are adequate to meet the required faculty-student ratios at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The dean is also the dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences. According to the dean, this arrangement works well and some positions are actually shared including the recently hired Associate Dean for Research and some research support staff. Faculty salaries in the SON are commendable in that they presently surpass the 75th percentile as reported by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) for nursing faculty on calendar year appointments at public institutions with doctoral programs in the western US. The ability to pay these salaries has allowed the dean to effectively recruit faculty as they are competitive with nurse executives in clinical agencies.

The SON is working hard to meet the university and school research mission and has made significant progress in obtaining external funding. Currently they have about $1M in extramural funds although most of it has come from HRSA for program development. The new research positions have moved the SON forward in this process - two examples of current research relate to obesity in our society and incorporation of foreign nurses into the American health care system. Faculty members also are very active in professional organizations, publishing and presenting papers, and participating in clinical practice and community organizations.

Assessment is an integral process of the SON. A detailed evaluation plan is used to monitor and review data on a regular basis and feedback from students, faculty, community representatives and clinical agencies is evaluated and incorporated into the curricula and the program as deemed appropriate.
There is concern relative to the university budget situation as one of the proposals which would save about $1M would be to eliminate the summer semester and only admit baccalaureate nursing students twice a year. The impact of this on the school would be a reduction of 48 FTES but it also would reduce the entire faculty from 12 month to 9 month appointments and result in a reduction of their salaries by one-third. The biggest problem with such a reduction would be a loss of faculty and an inability to recruit because of the high salaries paid to nurses in clinical settings both as staff nurses in hospitals and community agencies and as nurse executives.

**William S. Boyd School of Law**

The establishment, growth, and impact of UNLV’s William S. Boyd School of Law, compressed into a twelve-year span, is testimony to the wisdom and dedication of the founding dean, faculty, and staff; the hunger for legal education by Nevada residents and those from surrounding states; and, the effective influence of the School on levels of professionalism and practice of Nevada and particularly Las Vegas attorneys. No longer would Nevada residents have to go out of state to California, Arizona, or Utah to attend a public law school. No longer would aspiring attorneys miss the opportunity to perform clinic assistance and get academic credit for it. No longer would practicing lawyers in Las Vegas, Reno, and Laughlin want for continuing education or face-to-face assistance from an in-state law faculty, staff, and student body.

Measures of success come fast: A review of progress made since the Boyd School’s opening reveals several signal accomplishments. Assessment indicators show that the Boyd School holds its own in competing for Nevada admissions and attracts an entering class each year with progressively higher GPAs and LSAT scores. The dean and development officer have attracted considerable dollars to the school’s endowment. School alumni play an active role in recruitment, continuing education, fund-raising, and the presentation of workshops. The student body has a high retention rate, and students pass the Bar exam at a high rate. The 2009 pass rate was 86 percent.

Less tangible, but just as powerful, the law school at UNLV led the transformation from a “frontier lawyer” state bar association to one with a strong endorsement of professionalism, continuing education, and more diversified law services. In this short period of time, the size of law firms in Las Vegas, for example, grew from an average size of under ten lawyers to many that numbered above 25. While size is not, in itself, an indicator of sophistication or high-quality legal representation, it does suggest that attorneys have been growing their practices with good business plans and an eye toward a broader array of legal specializations. Such is a symbiotic relationship between the law school and the market. Whether causative or coincident, this growth appears to parallel the development of UNLV. The law school and the university share a mission that appreciates an inflow of resources and, in turn, produces knowledge to improve the service region.

A strong faculty from the start: The law school faculty has continued to improve, following a three-part wave that depicts the rapid development of the law school as a whole. The founding dean built the inaugural faculty by bringing with him faculty from Arizona State, recruiting other professors, and mixing
them with a small contingent of practicing attorneys. As this cohort of experienced teachers and scholars retired, they were replaced with a young, bright law faculty. Now, in the third stage, that second wave has matured into a seasoned, more senior contingent that continues to hold scholarship in high regard while supporting the outreach clinics of the school. According to school leadership, this three-part trend has been good for recruitment, good for mentoring, and instrumental in developing the outstanding clinics that represent the outreach component of the school. The Boyd School appears to be a faculty-centered unit with a strong research orientation that adheres to a rigorous interpretation of published research as the mark of scholarship. Evaluation committees abide by the minimum requirements regarding tenure and promotion.

The outreach character of the Boyd School of Law: Three clinics with an external focus are the Thomas and Mack Legal Clinic that serves as an in-house “law firm” that integrates academic and practice-based education; the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution, that prepares students to mediate disputes such as divorce settlements and neighborhood disagreements; and, the Externship program that places 150 students a year in judicial, government and public interest, Congressional, and other legislative offices. Throughout these exemplary programs runs a thread of service-learning that challenges students to connect classroom work with experiential learning. They are becoming “reflective practitioners” who learn a lot about themselves as well as the practice of law.

Assessment is thorough and complete: Assessment programs in the Boyd School of Law are extensive and thorough. Course-based assessment is traditional in nature, but applied at many junctures on the student’s path toward graduation and the Bar exam. Faculty members utilize predictable techniques such as comprehensive exams and writing assignments. Clinical course offerings and practice lend themselves to assessment by their very nature. Through observation, reflection, and reports from community supervisors, faculty and staff can and do note student performance on a regular basis. An exemplary practice that has been assessed highly is the Boyd School’s “Lawyering Process,” a three-semester, nine-hour program of instruction that teaches students to research, perform legal analysis and develop skills that will help them be better lawyers.

College of Urban Affairs

Faced with major budget shortfalls, the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs (GCUA) is trimming at the margins, trying to avoid painful discontinuations of faculty, programs, and departments. Many of the cuts are mandated from above, such as requiring tenured faculty to teach an additional course every two years, discontinuing merit raises for the foreseeable future, and limiting the number of sections taught by teaching assistants. Faculty interviewed expressed concern that several years of no merit raises would force some of their ranks, especially those most productive, to seek employment elsewhere. It was felt that UNLV would lose immeasurably, given the investment it had made in hiring a productive faculty. Relevant to Standard 2, some expressed concern that continued losses of faculty would threaten the ability of the university to provide sufficient, high caliber resources. While perhaps overstated, none of the GCUA faculty and administration wishes to experience prolonged cuts. The challenge is perhaps to make some tough decisions as part of a sorting out process. In this era of
reduced public support for higher education, what is certain is that UNLV, like all metropolitan, urban universities, can’t be all things to all people. Shaping a more relevant curriculum, consistent with the university’s mission and needs of a major metropolitan center, is likely the appropriate next stage in the heretofore robust economy of southern Nevada.

Leadership in a critical time: The dean is aware of these pressures and has worked hard to maintain an esprit de corps in the face of the tight budget. Like a notable number of interim administrative appointments across the university, the GCUA dean has taken some bold steps to offset anticipated deep budget cuts. For example, he dismantled the departments of environmental studies and public administration. He realigned the departments of criminal justice and communication studies to report directly to the dean, and merged environmental studies and public administration into a School of Environmental Studies and Public Affairs (SEPA). Although faculty from both disciplines are still working out the details and overcoming cultural differences, such a school has great potential to build theory-based, applied research and teaching that will have benefits for increased research, grant-getting, and community engagement. A newly appointed director appears to be providing aggressive leadership and believes that productive faculty can orient their research toward urban topics. Such research agendas should complement teaching assignments and the faculty’s service performance. At present, the environmental and public administration faculty have maintained separate tenure and promotion criteria, which need to meld into one process as soon as possible.

As a college, GCUA is well structured to help UNLV become a full-fledged urban, metropolitan university. Integrating research, teaching, and professional service, the faculty can help the university become both a top-flight research university while addressing regional and local issues. For example, the College’s Center for Solar and Renewable Energy, is studying a very critical need and abundant resource. In general terms, the Greenspun College of Urban Studies is well oriented toward its stated commitment to community engagement. In more specific actions, the college must, but definitely can, continue building academic programs that speak to collaborative forms of action. For example, the recent location of the Brookings Institution West center on the UNLV campus provides numerous and enriching opportunities for research and engaged scholarship. Brookings, as well as other national think-tanks with urban foci, has challenged the Las Vegas leadership that most definitely includes GCUA and UNLV, to reorient the metropolitan area toward a more enlightened, export-centered economy. The Las Vegas metropolitan area demonstrates all the opportunities and challenges faced by other large, U.S. urban conurbations. The Greenspun College of Urban Affairs should continue to build partnerships that speak to building quality, both in the classroom and in the community. No great city exists without a great university. GCUA can be a leader on both the national and regional scene: Without one the other languishes.

The Greenspun College, through its three schools and two departments, appears to have embraced the university’s mission that includes peer-recognized research, well-prepared students, and strategies to address the challenges of economic and cultural diversification, urban growth, social justice, and sustainability. GCUA may be uniquely situated to play a lead role in accomplishing this part of UNLV’s mission. For example, the faculty of the Department of Marriage and Family Therapy, prepares nearly half of all mental health counselors in the state to serve individuals and families in need. Faculty and
students in Journalism and Media Studies have reinvigorated both campus radio and television stations that reach a large audience in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. Faculty in SEPA regularly are collaborating with local, regional, and state governments in planning, managing, and evaluating public programs. A nascent certificate program in nonprofit studies appears to be highly appropriate given the concentration of nonprofits in the metropolitan area.

As the result of several annual rounds of strategic planning and resulting realignment of at least five departments, GCUA is well positioned to lead in engaged scholarship. Perhaps more focused planning and action that encourage faculty to conduct interdisciplinary research would help the College become greater than the sum of its parts.

Both the GCUA’s part of the self study and subsequent on-site interviews reveal a strong effort to strengthen graduate and undergraduate coursework. During this time of resource shortfall, such a focus is more important than ever, yet tempting to ignore in light of faculty concerns. Evidence suggests that GCUA faculty generally enjoy and embrace teaching, although many of those interviewed expressed concern that they will be asked to teach more (with larger sections) and have more student contact while expectations for research and community engagement continue or even grow. Newly approved minimum standards for tenure and promotion focus even more on research and in some iterations urge scrutiny by the College’s personnel committee of both quantity and quality performance.

**Continuing Education, Outreach, and Satellite Campuses**

The UNLV Division of Educational Outreach (EO) defines its mission as “assisting individuals, professional organizations, businesses, and governmental agencies, including the military, in meeting their learning objectives and needs through high quality credit and non-credit programs using a variety of locations, schedules and technologies.” This stated mission is compatible with and supportive of the mission of the larger institution that emphasizes enabling “graduates who are well prepared to enter the work force or to continue their education in graduate and professional programs.” EO fulfills this mission through the extension of university curriculum, faculty, and resources beyond the traditional academic programs of the UNLV campuses.

The Division occupies a strategic position within the organizational structure of the larger institution. EO is administered by a Vice Provost for Educational Outreach, reporting directly to the chief academic officer of the institution, the Executive Vice President and Provost. The Division underwent reorganization in October of 2009 to respond to the requirements in 2.G.4 that continuing education and special learning activities be recognized as an integral organizational component of the institution. The current structure consists of eight distinct operational units. The current organizational chart differs somewhat from the exhibit provided on page 2.32 of the Self-Study, the result of a continuing refinement of the Division in order to meet its responsibilities more effectively. These units include Summer Term, Distance Education, Continuing Education, Community 2 Campus, The Institute for Security Studies, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Public Lands Institute, and The Cannon Survey
Center. Each of these units is administered by a Director or Executive Director. The Divisional support services have been consolidated under the EO Vice Provost’s Office.

While EO retains a significant and positive relationship with the military, providing a number of academic programs and on-going contractual arrangements, it is in the final stages of closing its satellite campus located at Nellis, Air Force Base. Student enrollments in on-base offerings have declined both because of the number of competing academic institutions offering programs on the base and the constant “churn” in personnel being experienced on all military installations, particularly because of the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. EO has worked closely with Air Force Education staff in making this decision. The Air Force intends to intensify its efforts to “push” and support student enrollment in programs on the main UNLV campus.

EO administration, support units, and operating units are located on the Paradise Campus immediately adjacent to but separate from the main UNLV campus. This location provides parking and classroom facilities for programs targeted at meeting specific community needs and which may be short-term in time requirements. This enables these special populations to interface and interact with the University without the added inconvenience of competing with scheduled undergrad and graduate programs for classroom space and parking on the main campus. The exceptions to this are the Summer Session and Distance Education units, located on the main campus, which require daily face-to-face contact with on-campus faculty.

The administration and staff of EO appear to have a good sense of their position within the institution and their part in the mission of UNLV. The University administration has indicated their intent that EO become essentially totally self-supporting within a 2 – 5 year time frame. It is intended that a key responsibility of EO will be to serve as a revenue center for the University. The entire organization appears to have embraced this expanded responsibility and sees it as a positive challenge that not only is “doable” within the context of the current economy and its impact on the larger university community, but offers new opportunities for entrepreneurial efforts that will connect more broadly with the metro area and the region.

Some of the major units within EO, Distance Education and Summer Session in particular, already operate in a self-support mode, providing a revenue stream for collaborating academic partners. Each of these units has an approved operating fee for their course offerings that provides support for operational maintenance and program growth. Both Credit and Non-Credit program enrollments have shown consistent growth over the period 2005 – 2009. During the current economic down turn, DE enrollments continue to grow and Summer Session enrollments, while not as robust as in past periods, continue to increase. This growth provides a basis for the anticipated success of the move to self-sustainability.

Revenue sharing agreements, already in place, provide a percentage return of the tuition and/or fee income to the collaborating academic units. Faculty compensation is determined by the academic department usually as an “in-load” assignment. Overload teaching assignments for credit courses are
discouraged by the institution. The exception to this practice is in Summer Session. Most full-time faculty at UNLV have nine month contracts, making teaching assignments during Summer Session highly desirable. These assignments are contracted as overload assignments.

Credit programs/courses offered through EO are developed and offered through collaborative agreements with the academic departments. Faculty in these departments are directly involved in and responsible for the planning and approval of these courses/programs. Academic responsibility for the courses/programs remains with academic units. Programs and courses must be authorized by the academic unit insuring they meet established institutional policies and procedures for approval. These courses are taught by university approved faculty and require the same learning objectives and outcomes assessment as on-campus programs.

The granting of credit for CE courses and special learning activities comply with the established policies and procedures of UNLV for the granting of credit. Credit programs offered through EO have the same admission requirements and policies regarding use of transfer credit, CLEP credit, credit by examination, and residency as those required for all UNLV programs. EO does not offer credit for prior or experiential learning, as defined by NWCCU, unless provided for in a specific program offering of a partner academic unit.

Significant progress has been made by the various units within EO in actualizing the process of assessment of EO exclusive programs and academic programs presented in collaboration with academic partners. Although an effort had been made to collect data regarding student performance and satisfaction, this had not fully translated into consistent action or “feed-back loops” that resulted in intentional program modification or improvement. That process has been addressed with instruments being employed by each unit to do programmatic assessment, collect and analyze data, implement program improvement, and, in the case of the collaborative academic programs, assist faculty in improving their instructional strategies, presentation, and course management skills.

UNLV’s study abroad programs are administered by the Office of International Programs (Policy 2.4). EO does collaborate with academic departments in providing short, modular travel/study courses for which the academic departments offer credit. EO does offer non-credit travel programs for personal enrichment.

The Division of Educational Outreach is to be commended on its successful restructuring and its obvious embracing of its important role as a revenue center for the larger institution. The successful cultivation and use of partnerships, both internally and externally, to connect with constituents in the metropolitan Las Vegas area and region and provide programs that meet their needs, enhances the likelihood of the Division’s success in this arena.

Although the UNLV Division of Outreach Education has undergone a number of significant restructurings and redirections during this accreditation cycle, it is the Committee’s observation that EO’s programs, practices, and operations appear to be in substantial compliance with the elements of NWCCU Standard Two, 2.G.
**Educational Policy 2.1 General Education/Related Instruction**

The 2000 NWCC report outlined a recommendation regarding Policy 2.1 for the University to develop a rationale for general education and to develop outcomes in relationship to the University Mission. In response the University created a position of Director of General Education, in place from 2003-07 at which time the Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs joined the institution and took on the responsibly. A task force formed in 2003 worked with constituents across the university to put in place an interim general education program for 2004/05. The follow-up NWCCU interim report of 2005 noted that progress on general education had been made but they were unable to fully review the program until it was completing implemented, urging the Institution to move rapidly to adopt and implement the new program and then to engage in assessment activities to determine if goals were met.

Toward that end the general education program was approved and implemented in 2007 incorporating the Nevada System of Higher Education core requirements. A complete statement of requirements, rationale and learning outcomes are clearly delineated and widely available. A comprehensive planning process involving the entire campus is underway for further revisions of general education to be implemented in 2012.

**Educational Policy 2.2 Educational Assessment**

The University continues to make significant progress on assessing the effectiveness of its educational programs. Assessment remains a top priority supported by the President and Provost; however, the effort by the University to develop a culture that supports a student outcomes assessment approach to program and course renewal remains a work in progress. Given the current financial situation, a challenge will be to maintain assessment as a top priority for the University.

The Director of Academic Assessment has the responsibility for campus-wide general education assessment initiatives and is advised by a committee composed of representatives from the schools, colleges, and other campus units. An Institutional Plan for Assessment exists and outlines the basic tenets of the meaning and purposes of assessment across the institution. The majority of the work has focused on programs in the academic areas with assessment plans for General Education just now coming into place and work in the Honors College has also lagged.

University policy asks each academic program area to identify direct and indirect methods of assessment to assess student-learning outcomes and to submit status reports regarding these efforts. The Director of Assessment indicates that 88%-90% of the University’s programs have done so. At this point, there is no penalty or sanction for a professor or program unit for not submitting reports.

The issue of *prima facie* noncompliance with the policy and the unevenness of the use of outcome data by programs need to be addressed. Therefore, it is recommended that such additional steps be taken.
to assign responsibility for implementation at the appropriate administrative level (for example the deans of the schools and colleges) as will lead to full implementation of and accountability for the University’s policies on student learning assessment.

While some programs lag in the acceptance of these policies, more and more departments are developing student learning outcomes, using these outcomes to assess student learning, and using the data for the renewal of program. The Director of Assessment and the advisory committee are able to cite numerous examples of how programs are using student data. There is a need for a wider dissemination of these examples across the campus to foster discussions about how student data may be used effectively and what types of instruments may be used.

The University has moved forward since the 2007 Focused Interim Evaluation report in the establishment of a university-wide student assessment program and an administrative structure to support this effort. With additional the step of directing appropriate administrative participation to ensure programmatic review, the University will be able to establish a system that begins with the identification of student learning outcomes and ends with the analysis of these data for the purpose of program and course renewal. Such a university-wide system will assist the University in meeting its obligations to assess its educational programs and the ability to determine whether or not students are achieving the learning outcomes identified for the program.

**Educational Policy 2.4 Study Abroad Programs**

The Office of International Programs (OIP) is the institution’s centralized coordinating unit for international education. Study abroad programs administered by OIP further the mission of UNLV by providing multidisciplinary international programs designed to develop global perspectives and intercultural understanding among UNLV students and participating faculty. All proposed study abroad offerings are reviewed utilizing UNLV guidelines for international program proposals prior to seeking approval from the NSHE administration. Annual publications, campus events, guest speakers, and classroom presentations also provide opportunities for students to learn more about international education. A critical component of OIP’s success in providing international programs is its membership in the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC). USAC currently offers thirty-eight programs in twenty-five countries. Full time Resident Directors are employed by USAC at all program sites where students are enrolled for UNLV credit. OIP also participates in the Council on International Educational Exchange program in Japan and the National Student Exchange program, which offers qualified undergraduate students study opportunities for up to one year at another NSE member institution without paying out-of-state tuition. Students in the College of Education can apply to participate in international student teaching in a variety of locations worldwide. Graduate students can apply for funding through the UNLV International Programs office for some international research purposes.

Students participating in USAC sponsored programs are provided with on-site evaluation instruments and a follow-up evaluation after the end of their study abroad programs. At the end of the term students are asked to evaluate individual courses and their interactions with OIP and its academic
The evaluations are used to monitor academic quality, student satisfaction, and general program management.

The evaluation committee would especially commend the Office of International Programs for its extensive array of international programs available to the UNLV community and on its institution-wide and system-wide collaborative approach to program administration and management. This represents a distinctive commitment of the university to global education.

It is the Committee’s observation that OIP’s programs, practices, and operations appear to be in substantial compliance with the elements of NWCCU Policy 2.4.

**Educational Policy 2.6 Distance Delivery of Courses, Certificate and Degree Programs**

The distance education programs offered through the Division of Educational Outreach Distance Education unit (DE) support the instructional mission of the institution and are integrated into the curricular structure of the academic units of the University. Distance Education, primarily online instruction at UNLV, appears to be increasingly accepted by faculty as a normal approach to doing the business of instruction. Distance Education classes are offered as duplicate sections, options to face-to-face sections, the only section offered during a term, or as part of an entire program available online. Distance Education became a self-supporting unit in 2009, charging a Distance Education Fee for all course offerings. The fee has increased from $25 to $35 since the response to Policy 2.6 was included in the Self Study document. The Distance Education Fee covers operating costs and provides for program maintenance and growth.

Design, development, delivery, and support of academic credit courses and programs are provided by DE. However, there is a clear delineation between the role of DE and the responsibility of the partner academic units for the course content, quality, and relevance to the curriculum. Individual faculty or academic units initiate requests for course/program development. A one-time incentive stipend is provided to faculty for developing distance education courses.

*Although the Distance Education Advisory Group (DEAG) has been in existence for several years, its active participation in the program generation and approval process in recent years has been negligible. The new Director of Distance Education is in the process of reenergizing the group and making it an actively engaged representative advisory and advocacy body. The current membership of the DEAG, made up of faculty representing an array of disciplines and actively engaged in distance education, is enthusiastically embracing this reconstitution of the body.*

Faculty interviewed indicated that distance education has become part of the fabric of UNLV instruction, widely accepted across the disciplines. It was viewed as a critical tool in framing the future of the institution as it meets the needs of its constituencies as an urban university with an emerging “new majority” student body. It was unanimously viewed, among those interviewed, as an accepted part of the “way we do business” at UNLV. There was a desire expressed among faculty interviewed that the distance education technical infrastructure be raised in priority to the level of a “utility” and that it be
“naturalized” to eliminate the need for students and faculty to interact with multiple systems and processes. The desired outcome was to increase the time that students and faculty are engaged in the teaching-learning process rather than having to dedicate excessive time to “dealing with” a variety of technologies.

DE assists the academic units in the gathering of relevant assessment data that will complement their course and faculty evaluation processes. DE also gathers data related to delivery and support mechanisms and their impact on the student experience. This is an active “feed-back” process that is utilized for course improvement. A goal of DE is to build a larger inventory of degree programs available entirely by distance education rather than concentrating on single course offerings. The success of the current “online” programs offers significant support to this effort.

All academic and curricular support decisions for courses and programs offered in a distance education delivery mode must meet the same requirements as traditional, face-to-face courses. The Distance Education unit offers instructional design and pedagogical support for faculty developing and teaching distance education courses and programs.

DE provides, either through collaborative arrangements with other campus entities or development of unique online services, the full range of student support services for students at a distance. This effort is based on the concept that any student support service a student could access on campus should be available in an online environment.

The UNLV Division of Educational Outreach and the Distance Education unit are to be commended for the commitment to quality and service that is evident in the operations of EO Distance Education and for the way that Distance Education has been embraced and incorporated into the instructional strategies of many of the major academic units of the University.

It is the observation of the Committee that the distance delivery of courses, certificate, and degree programs offered by UNLV Division of Educational Outreach Distance Education appear to be in compliance with the elements of NWCCU Policy 2.6.

**Standard Three**

**Students**

Student programs and services seek to advance the university’s mission through providing access, retention, engagement and support for students. Programs and services are organized and function consistent with the university’s goal of recruiting and supporting a diverse student body through to graduation. The university offers a comprehensive array of support services that respond to the unique backgrounds, learning needs and varying enrollment patterns of students. Student service professionals perform their roles through an educational philosophy that recognizes student learning occurs in all aspects of a student’s university experience.
Student service staff members are well qualified and have appropriate educational backgrounds to execute the responsibilities of their roles. The university’s standards and processes for filling vacancies are clearly defined and effectively executed. Individual personnel have detailed position descriptions and are provided with sufficient feedback through annual evaluations to enable on-going growth and professional development.

Policies, procedures and programs are designed to be in alignment with the university’s mission as a public university in the Nevada System of Higher Education. Policies and procedures are widely and clearly communicated in a variety of formats. Student conduct issues are adjudicated employing an educational philosophy that looks at the nature of the behavioral issue and the unique circumstances of the student in order to determine the appropriate resolution of the incident. Student conduct policies afford due process and appropriate appeal mechanisms.

UNLV’s administrative practices and service delivery reflects a commitment to on-going improvement. The university conducts regular program evaluations and administers surveys to solicit extensive student input on the quality and appropriateness of services. Responses from these surveys are used to guide decision-making and influence resource allocation and program improvement. Among the efforts initiated as a result of feedback from student surveys are: changes in the academic advising system, additional diversity support structures, a restructured student meal plan, increased security lighting, “trayless” dining, increased tutoring, additional security cameras, and many others. While UNLV has invested in improvement-oriented strategies, the university still lags behind its peers on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), which it administers on a regular basis. Clearly, university leaders take survey results seriously as evidenced by their efforts to address student concerns.

UNLV provides student services based upon assessment of student needs. Services and programs are designed to address the common and unique needs found among the increasingly diverse students at the university. The university uses data gathered through a variety of survey instruments (SSI, Educational Benchmarking Inc., NSSE, Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership, as well as internally crafted surveys) to inform its programs and services. Data generated through surveys is shared widely within student affairs and with other campus leaders. University leaders respond to data to address students’ needs and expectations, this is particularly apparent in their reaction to students’ responses to questions related to campus climate. The university’s increased support for historically underrepresented students reflects its commitment to diversity and acting on campus climate survey results. The commitment to diversity would be further enhanced by greater on-going support for hiring more faculty and staff from underrepresented backgrounds to teach, mentor and support the increasingly diverse student body.

The Consolidated Students of Nevada, Las Vegas (CSUN) is the formal student governance body for the university. The majority of campus committees include student members. Students are represented on and participate actively in faculty and other university governance committees. Student leaders enjoy a collegial, open relationship with campus administrators. Students have sufficient mechanisms for input on policies and programs. Indeed, the members of the evaluation committee were particularly
impressed with the uncommon commitment of students – not only student leaders – to the mission of
the university and their knowledge of its distinctive place within Nevada higher education, and, finally,
their articulate and passionate advocacy on its behalf. This was a rare experience.

Students are provided with clear and accessible information on their rights and responsibilities. The
student handbook and university catalog are available on-line and in hardcopy. The student conduct
system is aligned with policies of the NSHE. Policies and procedures are clearly articulated in numerous
campus publications. Students accused of policy violations are accorded due process throughout the
adjudication of an alleged policy infraction.

UNLV employs a campus police force, which is available around the clock. The UNLV Police force is
authorized at the same level of power as the City of Las Vegas police agency. The UNLV Police have
forged a strong cooperative relationship with the City of Las Vegas Police and established jurisdiction
that allows it to respond to safety issues on properties contiguous with the UNLV campus. The campus
police operate on a community policing philosophy and patrol the campus using such modalities as foot
patrols, bicycles, horseback, motorcycles and T3 mobiles (Segway-type vehicles). The campus has a
well-developed security system that includes an electronic card system for residence halls, an
emergency notification system and an emergency operations center. The Public Safety Advisory Board is
in place to improve the service of the police department to the community. In addition, regular safety
training is provided for key campus personnel.

The university publishes and distributes its university handbook annually and its catalog every two years.
The handbook and catalog provide students with essential information on policies, procedures,
academic program requirements, rights and responsibilities, and course offerings. Tuition and fee
information is published annually.

Student services programs are evaluated annually through the use of multiple measures. The results of
these surveys are used as the basis for planning and resource investment. University leaders conduct
regular program evaluation and use the data received to improve the university’s offerings. When
survey data revealed continued difficulty with retaining first-year students the Provost appointed a First-
Year Experience Task Force to effect change in this area. Initiated in 2008 the Task Force produced
numerous outcomes, including: increasing financial aid; creating and Academic Success Center;
implementing mandatory academic advising; and creation of a Transfer Center, among other initiatives.

The Registrar’s office maintains records for all undergraduate students, while each graduate program
maintains graduate records. Academic coursework records for all students are maintained in a
university database; hard copy records for current students are maintained in the Registrar’s Office;
older records are stored in a NSHE database. All records are appropriately secured.

All degree, certificate and transfer requirements, and the student right-to-know policy are managed and
communicated by the Registrar’s Office. The Registrar’s Office effectively communicates and manages
criteria for evaluating student academic performance, documenting degree progress, administering
policies related to transfer credit, and awarding credits. Policies governing the student academic experience are regularly updated and made available to students.

UNLV offers non-degree programs and credit through its Division of Educational Outreach. Policies regarding the awarding of credit, including advanced placement and international baccalaureate are well documented and easily accessed.

Policies regarding transfer of credit are clearly articulated and available on-line and in the printed version of the university catalog. In addition, policies and criteria governing special transfer agreements with other institutions are clearly communicated. Transfer credit from Nevada public colleges is easily facilitated by the uniform course numbering system mandated by the NSHE.

University employees (including students and teaching assistants) are provided with regular training on the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA), based on how the policy applies to their particular roles. There is a system in place to ensure that personnel have the necessary training prior to granting access to student records or data. Specifically, a faculty or staff member requesting access to student records is required to complete FERPA training and sign a document verifying their understanding of the regulation. FERPA is adhered to in the management of student records. In addition to student records are maintained on a secure computer system, hard copies are maintained in secure files. This is a well-managed, efficient operation, with numerous levels of securing and backing up records.

UNLV articulates a bold commitment to recruit, retain and graduate a diverse student body. Admissions and financial aid policies, processes and strategies align to create a congruent and integrated approach to enrolling students. Admissions and financial aid professionals adhere to the ethical standards of their professional associations, which are reflected in their departmental strategies. The university admits students through a comprehensive review of the applicant’s profile, relying upon multiple sources of information to judge a prospective student’s capabilities. In an effort to increase access to those from historically underrepresented and low-income backgrounds and increase awareness of specific support needs, UNLV employs the Insight Resume. The Insight Resume allows for the assessment of student potential for success by documenting non-cognitive predictors of student success. Because the Insight Resume has not been formally approved as an admissions tool by the NSHE, completing the instrument is optional for applicants. The university’s enrollment goals are supported and reinforced by the university’s admissions and financial aid strategies. The university’s staffing of the Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach, its new approach to academic advising and the Office of Student Diversity Programs and Services, among others, demonstrates a high degree of commitment to respond to the needs of its diverse student body.

The initial academic schedule and course placement for admitted students is determined based on a mix of assessment measures, testing and prior academic performance. All first-year students much select their initial courses in conjunction with an academic advisor. The university’s approach to academic advising is facilitated through college Academic Advising Centers. While the investment in academic advising has been significantly increased, the system is characterized by uneven quality. Though efforts
have been made to lower the student-faculty advising ratio, the current ratio still makes it difficult for some students to receive timely, responsive advising. The degree of support students receive in monitoring degree progress varies by the student’s academic program. The DARS system is a valuable tool for assisting students in self-monitoring degree progress and plan academic programs. The degree audit system is currently being transitioned to the newly launched PeopleSoft system.

University policies governing academic continuation, maintaining good standing, and graduation are clearly articulated in the university catalog. Additionally, appeal and readmission processes for students suspended from the University for academic or behavioral reasons are clearly defined.

UNLV administers financial aid in accordance with the standard practices of the profession. The university regularly audits its program to ensure soundness of practices. The university’s website provides students with accurate information and sufficient guidance to complete the application process. The university complies with federal policy mandating financial aid counseling for new and departing students receiving Federal loans. As the cost of education and rate of enrollment have escalated, the university has increased its investment in financial aid for students.

All new students receive a comprehensive orientation to UNLV through its Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration Program. Students from diverse backgrounds and with specific needs (commuter, transfer, international, Honors and multicultural) receive targeted orientations to respond to their unique needs and challenges. Orientation allows students to meet with academic advisors, register for classes, interact with peers and initiate contacts to address unique individual issues a student may have.

The university assigns all new students an academic advisor. Students receive ample support for academic, career and life planning needs. UNLV has organized its health, recreation and counseling areas in an alignment to give prominence to its focus on promoting student wellness. Staffing in these areas is sufficient to meet the current needs of the UNLV student body. Through a mix of university employees, student trainees, and consulting professionals, students have access to skilled and knowledgeable personnel to address their mental health, healthcare and health promotion needs.

University housing and food service offer an array of services and options. The level of programming and competence of the housing staff contributes positively to the quality of the UNLV student experience. Students describe a dynamic and vibrant residence hall experience, characterized by positive community and vigorous exchange of ideas. Residence hall staff are highly committed and deeply engaged in supporting students. The university offers a food service program that is responsive to the needs of student. In recent years many changes have been made in the food services area based on feedback received from students. The university provides adequate bookstore services. UNLV offers a rich and diverse array of extra-curricular activities for students. The university employs, thoroughly trains and closely advises student activity Student programs and services seek to advance the university’s mission through providing access, retention, engagement and support for students. Programs and services are organized and function consistent with the university’s goal of recruiting and
supporting a diverse student body through to graduation. The university offers a comprehensive array of support services that respond to the unique backgrounds, learning needs and varying enrollment patterns of students. Student service professionals perform their roles through an educational philosophy that recognizes student learning occurs in all aspects of a student’s university experience.

Student service staff members are well qualified and have appropriate educational backgrounds to execute the responsibilities of their roles. The university’s standards and processes for filling vacancies are clearly defined and effectively executed. Individual personnel have detailed position descriptions and are provided with sufficient feedback through annual evaluations to enable on-going growth and professional development.

Policies, procedures and programs are designed to be in alignment with the university’s mission as a public university in the Nevada System of Higher Education. Policies and procedures are widely and clearly communicated in a variety of formats. Student conduct issues are adjudicated employing an educational philosophy that looks at the nature of the behavioral issue and the unique circumstances of the student in order to determine the appropriate resolution of the incident. Student conduct policies afford due process and appropriate appeal mechanisms

UNLV’s administrative practices and service delivery reflects a commitment to on-going improvement. The university conducts regular program evaluations and administers surveys to solicit extensive student input on the quality and appropriateness of services. Responses from these surveys are used to guide decision-making and influence resource allocation and program improvement. Among the efforts initiated as a result of feedback from student surveys are: changes in the academic advising system, additional diversity support structures, a restructured student meal plan, increased security lighting, “trayless” dining, increased tutoring, additional security cameras, and many others. While UNLV has invested in improvement-oriented strategies, the university still lags behind its peers on the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), which it administers on a regular basis. Clearly, university leaders take survey results seriously as evidenced by their efforts to address student concerns.

UNLV is a member of the Mountain West Conference, competing at the NCAA Division I level. The university sponsors seventeen intercollegiate sports teams, seven men’s sports and 10 women’s. The athletic program budget is developed as part of the university’s budget process and operates consistent with the mission of the university. Recently the athletic department participated in the NCAA certification process. A thorough self-study was conducted to look at all aspects of the program’s management and functioning. Coaches are hired, oriented and supervised in a manner that allows them to perform consistent with the university mission, NCAA regulations and campus human resource policies. All athletic department employees, including students, receive thorough training on FERPA and compliance regulations. Currently, the university employs full-time coaches in all sports. The department has clearly written goals and policies for student-athletes and coaches, congruent with the university’s mission. Admissions and financial aid for student-athletes are handled consistent with the institutional practices applied to all students at the university. The athletic administration has been quite attentive to addressing issues of gender equity within the department.
Policy 3.1 – Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status

UNLV accurately and ethically represents itself in publications, communications and face-to-face interactions with prospective students. The university represents its accredited status accurately.

Standard Four
Faculty

Most of the faculty at UNLV are professionally qualified for their roles and have a primary commitment to the university. One of the major goals over the last 15 years has been the recruitment of faculty who meet both the education and research needs of the institution. There are now about 1000 full time faculty as compared to 689 in 2000. This has been a 36% increase in faculty that compares favorably to the 41% increase in student FTEs during that time. Of these faculty, 74% are tenured, 6% are on tenure tracks and 81% hold terminal degrees. Women comprise 35.2 % and 22.6% are ethnic minorities. The retention rate of faculty over their first six years has been 68.3 %. Failure to obtain tenure or promotion accounted for 11% of those who left, 23% retired and the remaining 66% of those who left indicated personal reasons. One of the goals of the institution is to get a better handle on those faculty members who leave for personal reasons and why they do so.

The university has a prescribed and effective process for recruitment and appointment of new faculty and this is followed by the various academic units. Efforts continue to be made to increase the diversity to better represent the diversity of the state.

The institution has reviewed the number of student credit hours (SCH) taught by full time faculty in 2008 and determined that the percents were 54% of undergraduates and 84% of graduate SCHs with an average of 58 %. A breakdown by faculty type revealed that, 11.7% were taught by professors, 17.2% by associate professors, 14.2% by Assistant professors, 11.4 % by lecturers, 28.9% by part time faculty and 16.4% by graduate assistants and others. In comparing the data to other universities, high research institutions were at 72% and very high research institutions were at 67%.

Part-time faculty are important to the teaching mission of the university with approximately 675 appointed during the 2007-08 academic year. These faculty are appropriately prepared but, depending on the school/college, some come with experience and industry credentials rather than terminal degrees. The hiring of part-time faculty is done by the college, school or department, however, the provost’s office has a comprehensive web site for part-time faculty and the Teaching and Learning Center offers a part time instructor teaching certificate. Supervision and evaluation varies considerably according to department and school/college, however, the university requires that all part time instructors be evaluated via the uniform course evaluation system. Currently, due to budget constraints, the number of part-time faculty as well as graduate assistants has been significantly reduced resulting in increased teaching loads of the full-time tenured faculty.
Student satisfaction surveys indicate fairly consistent levels of satisfaction with the quality of faculty although the averages are slightly lower than those of the western four-year public institutions. Faculty participate actively in academic planning, particularly since 2006 when efforts were begun on the current strategic plan. Each college and school has an executive committee as well as a number of standing committees that develop short and long term goals for both the college and the institution as well as engage in curriculum planning. Additionally, there is an active faculty senate with a number of committees that play an integral role in faculty governance including regular review of academic programs as well as budgetary matters. A graduate council with appropriate faculty representation reviews and sets policy for graduate programs. Faculty mentioned that in the last few years there has been a certain amount of apathy related to governance issues across the university, however, that apathy has dissipated with the recent serious budgetary concerns.

Most faculty members are on nine month appointments with expectations that summers will be used for research, scholarship and creative endeavors. Quite a number do teach courses during the summer, however, and are reimbursed over and above their academic year salaries. Each academic unit is expected to have a workload plan or formula that fits with and complements its mission and focus. These must be consistent with the UNLV workload assignment policy. The general teaching load across the university for full time faculty in units that offer advanced degrees is three courses per semester (3-3) or two courses per semester plus theses, dissertations and other independent study arrangements. Reports from the various academic units indicate there is considerable variation with some teaching 4-4 and others 2-2 or less, in part due to administrative oversight and unit research productivity. This biennium the legislature has required all tenured faculty to teach an additional .5 class or take a 4% pay cut. This requirement is being met in a variety of ways from team teaching to rotating faculty in classes, etc.

Faculty salaries vary by discipline according to the national marketplace. For most disciplines at UNLV, they are comparable with both public doctoral high research and very high research institutions. Assistant professors are at the 90th percentile while other faculty ranks are slightly above the mean. However, there have not been any merit salary increases for the last two years and it is not expected there will be any for the next two to three years due to budget constraints.

Each academic unit follows the university’s procedures for retention, tenure and promotion. These criteria require that, in addition to teaching, all regular faculty participate in research or artistic activities and service. The various academic units determine the criteria for their faculty and evaluate their involvement on an annual basis.

In a meeting held with faculty by the site visitors, it was noted that attendees were comprised of a large number of faculty from the School of Nursing, a few were from the other health sciences and a small number (6 or 7) from the other disciplines in the university. Following the meeting, members of the group indicated there is a great deal of anxiety and low morale among the faculty ranks due to the potential budget cuts and program reductions and they attributed the low attendance to the this issue.
When faculty in attendance at the meeting were asked as to the three things they particularly appreciated at the university, they indicated that first, was the “can do” attitude. Things can get done quickly and there is the sense of a dynamic progressing institution, at least until the current budget crisis hit. They also indicated they felt an ownership of UNLV as well as a new respect in the community for the university. Faculty also expressed confidence in the leadership of the president and his ability to deal with the current budget crisis.

Faculty are involved in various scholarly and creative activities and have opportunities for development through sabbaticals and other approved leaves. Over the last several years there has been a steady increase in research and scholarly activity within all the colleges and schools which, to some extent, appears to be the result of the increase in faculty numbers. Faculty do understand this is an important component of their roles as tenured, tenure track and/or research faculty and generally support this initiative to move toward becoming a “very high research” institution. However, members of the committee were informed by numerous faculty members as well as administrators that, although the expectations are there, they are seriously lacking in support services to assist them in preparing grant applications, managing grants and bringing in other types of extramural funding. This appears to be the result of current university policies related to research, reduction in staff in the Office of Sponsored Projects, limited money for summer research, reduction in graduate assistants and a general lack of available help within the various academic units.

Most faculty members engage in service activities. These include membership and leadership in professional organizations, and service to the community through a variety of endeavors, many related to the university and its developing position as an urban university. In the year 2007, 1801 service activities were reported.

**Policy 4.1 Faculty Evaluation**

Regular performance evaluation is an integral component of each school/college. All faculty are evaluated, usually by their department chair, on an annual basis. These evaluations address the areas of teaching, scholarship and service and are more extensive for faculty on tenure tracks at year three. Tenured faculty are given a ranking of satisfactory or unsatisfactory and, if they receive an unsatisfactory rating two years in a row, may be subject to termination. Tenure track faculty are evaluated using a four point scale. Unsatisfactory evaluations are reviewed by the dean and improvement plans developed with the faculty member. The evaluations are then sent by the dean to the office of the provost.

One of the concerns of a number of faculty in some units is that assessment of their teaching is based almost exclusively on student evaluations. This appears to be less common in units that have comprehensive assessment plans in place. Another concern that was expressed is the increasing emphasis on research performance when current teaching load policies do not allow the time needed to do the research.

Determination of merit ratings for salary increases is a separate process. Each school/college is required to have a committee that determines both the amount of money to be awarded for merit (when money
is available) as well as the actual merit rating for each faculty member. The dean has the opportunity to review these rating with the potential to make changes; however, whether he or she makes changes or not depends on the particular school/college.

**Standard Five**

**Library and Information Resources**

A dramatic photograph of the Lied Library graces the cover of the UNLV Self-Study report emphasizing the substantial and central role the UNLV Libraries play in the life of this institution. During the past decade UNLV has made a sizeable investment to upgrade its libraries which has laid the foundation for significant library contributions to teaching, learning, research and service. Outstanding leadership, excellent physical facilities, a dedicated and productive staff, and a strong reliance on assessment data to inform and improve services and resources have led to substantial improvements and libraries that are recognized as major assets to the University and region.

Between 2001 and 2009 the University Libraries budget nearly doubled, increasing from $10 million per year to more than $18 million annually. The collections budget showed a similar increase from $4 million in 2000 to more than $7 million in 2009. The University Libraries has invested heavily in electronic resources and has adroitly leveraged membership and participation in several consortia to extend buying power. University Libraries now provides access to about 23,000 current journals, more than 90% of which are available electronically. Whereas ten years ago the University Libraries could not support graduate and faculty research in a number of areas, today the collections are appropriate for a research university with high research activity. **Recent budget reductions are a concern and, if continued, can constrain the ability of the library to support research. This is especially true in areas that depend heavily on monographic and other one-time purchases as those budgets have been cut 50% in the last year to protect ongoing commitments to serials.**

The Law Library has built an impressive collection and suite of services in the relatively short period since its creation in 1998. While collections funding has leveled off during the past few years, the library has taken the opportunity to review and revise its collecting policies. Through efficiencies and closer matching of collections to programs the library has maintained the high quality collection needed to support Law School programs and clinics.

Library facilities are all relatively new and provide high quality space. The 300,000 square foot Lied Library, the flagship library of the University, opened in 2001 offering 300 public computer stations, 3200 seats, and capacity for more than 2 million volumes (utilizing an automated stack retrieval system to house many volumes). Service areas are spacious and there are specialized teaching classrooms and group study and work areas. However, overall student headcount has increased by 6,000 from 2001 to 2009 leading to higher use and contention for seating and computers during peak times, including finals. The way students work has also changed with increased numbers working together and in need of
specialized areas such as presentation and group work spaces. Planning is underway for a proposed Lied Library renovation which will help this landmark facility meet needs for library services and resources in the future. Three branch libraries in new or renovated facilities also serve more specialized programs and provide additional collections space, service areas, seating and computers: Architecture (1997, 250 seats, Curriculum (2005, 75 seats) and Music (2001, 35 seats). The Law Library, which is part of the Law School, occupies a spacious, comfortable renovated facility which was opened in 2002.

The University Libraries and its librarians have established solid connections to teaching, learning and research programs in the University community. The Libraries assigns a liaison librarian to each College and during the past few years much effort has gone into broadening the responsibilities of these liaisons beyond collection development and invited course instruction. They now work closely with faculty and students on issues of scholarly communication, institutional repositories, student learning outcomes, and research consultations.

While the Libraries has a strong program of teaching information skills directly to students, librarians have also worked diligently with instructors to incorporate information literacy skills and competencies in courses and to better faculty integrate research and teaching at the undergraduate level. The Libraries sponsored the first Faculty Institute on Research-based Learning for high impact courses which brought faculty and librarians together to create research-based learning (with defined learning and assessment outcomes) for these courses.

The Libraries and librarians have taken leadership in other learning initiatives that have incorporated information literacy competencies within many courses and programs. iCritical Thinking, a skills and competencies based instrument developed by the Educational Testing Service, was administered to nearly 300 freshman. The instrument provides baseline performance data and outcomes assessment for students in critical thinking within a digital environment. The use of this instrument along with other enhancements to the “first year experience” provides an integrated approach to effective student learning that goes beyond traditional library instruction.

The University Libraries has developed a robust assessment program which uses multiple assessment methods to acquire user input, satisfaction, needs, and performance as well as usability of library discovery tools and Websites. A half-time assessment librarian coordinates and supports many of these efforts and also serves as a liaison to campus assessment efforts. The Libraries then uses assessment information on an ongoing basis to improve services and resources. Information literacy learning outcomes assessment methods includes the use of iSkills and iCritical Thinking, textual analysis, rubrics, reference and citation analysis, pre and post tests and a variety of qualitative methods. The Libraries has developed a data matrix which tracks key data and makes them available for analysis and use by library staff. The University Libraries has become an evidence-based management organization that uses ongoing usage and assessment data to inform decision making. Examples of this integrated approach can be seen in collection assessment which utilizes interviews, course catalogs, faculty and students, surveys, and focus groups to get information about program changes and library needs and combines these with data rich usage statistics (both print and online) to provide a multidimensional picture of
library use and needs by discipline. These results are shared by librarian liaisons with their programs as well as to make decisions on journal subscriptions and acquisition of other information resources.

The UNLV Libraries administer the LibQUAL+® user satisfaction survey on a cyclical basis. The latest survey in 2009 showed extraordinarily high library satisfaction among all groups – undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. Satisfaction had increased substantially from earlier surveys as well as the perceived positive impact of library instruction. The Libraries analysis of survey results (including comments) was thorough and identified areas where services could be improved such as discovery tools and online services as well as noise control and access to equipment and group study areas within libraries. Other surveys confirm these results. UNLV graduating seniors have consistently ranked quality of library services as their highest rated academic experience on the annual senior surveys. The 2008 Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) showed the University Libraries as an institutional strength and it was the only UNLV service that rated higher than the national comparator group.

Library staff are well-trained and have the appropriate expertise needed to accomplish their work. The UNLV Libraries provides good professional development and training support. Librarians are active on campus, in professional societies and in scholarly presentations and publications. Librarians have faculty status and participate in wide range of University committees and services such as the Academic Success Center, General Education Advisory Committee, Assessment Committee, Graduate and Undergraduate course review committees, First Year Experience Working Group, Committee on the Culture of Teaching and Learning. There is a well-defined promotion and tenure system for library faculty and all faculty and staff are evaluated on a regular basis. A number of vacant faculty staff positions were lost during the most recent budget reduction and this has constrained the maintenance and enhancement of high priority library programs.

The UNLV Libraries have a clear understanding of the University mission, curriculum and strategic priorities. For example, the University Libraries Special Collections focuses on unique strengths of the institution such as gaming studies, hospitality management, local history and culture, and arid environments. The recent hire of a sustainability librarian is another reflection of mission support. The University Libraries strategic plans are closely aligned with those of the University and have included evaluative components. While the University Libraries Strategic Plan utilizes assessment data from users, this document was created internally and did not receive any direct faculty or student input or review. Given the institutional importance of the Libraries, stakeholder and user input on the plan should be solicited in the future.

The University of Nevada Las Vegas has dramatically increased its investment in libraries and has been rewarded with library facilities, collections and services that complement and add luster to the University’s mission and aspirations. The University Libraries has also taken a leadership role in moving information literacy competencies to an integral part of student learning outcomes. The University Libraries was invited to join the Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA) in 2008, apt recognition of its growing stature as a research library. As UNLV enters a new decade, UNLV libraries are well positioned to enhance the already significant library contributions to the University and beyond.
Information Technology

Information Technology (IT) performance made great strides at UNLV during the past decade. IT staffing has grown, there are nearly 50 student computer labs with more than 1400 computers, 75% of general classrooms have been converted into technology-enhanced facilities, wireless has been installed in many academic and classroom buildings and customer service has been strengthened. The Office of Information Technology (OIT), led by a Vice-Provost, is the primary organization responsible for computing support of teaching and learning.

OIT has also assumed responsibility for several activities handled by other units or agencies during this period. OIT took over the course management system (CMS) from Distance Education (DE) in 2003 for UNLV campus courses and nearly 50% of all course sections now use WebCampus (CMS), a substantial increase from less than 10% in 2003. OIT has begun local implementation of the PeopleSoft administrative software system (iNtegrate) starting with the student information module in April 2010. As resources become available the current human resources and finance systems will be replaced. OIT also completed the migration of the student email system from the state higher education System Computing Services (SCS) to Google e-mail. These latter two projects required sufficient personnel time during a period of staffing shortages.

While OIT has clearly moved forward during the past ten years, as it matures as an organization the University needs to more clearly define its role and mission in research and administrative support and as well as develop a more stable funding model. Without clearer direction, OIT strategic planning is often by necessity short term and operational in nature. OIT understands the campus needs in these areas but due to limited resources and mission, tends to react and respond rather than lead. Changes in the role and activities of other computing groups (UNLV units, Supercomputer Center, System Computing Services, Distance Education) complicate the issue when OIT is asked to take responsibility for these programs. Funding for student-related computing and information technology support of teaching comes from a student technology fee which provides about 25% of OIT funding. Other revenue sources include ongoing money, and unspent end-of-the-year funds from the Provost that is often used to purchase equipment. The last source has not been available the past two years and replacement of some computing equipment has been deferred. OIT is working on both server and network rate structures to ensure revenue can cover costs.

OIT staff are knowledgeable and display a strong service commitment. Training and professional development support is good and has grown during the past five years. OIT has gathered user input the past few years through student and staff surveys conducted every 18-24 months. These surveys show general satisfaction with OIT services, with high ratings for staff competency and service commitment and lower ratings for wireless coverage and reliability. OIT used the survey results to prepare action plans to improve services. Other input comes in from the service desk requests and follow-ups, interviews and several institutional committees that include faculty, staff and students. Graduating seniors rate access to computer facilities and service second only to quality of library resources among
academic support services in the annual senior surveys. National surveys show UNLV ratings similar to those of comparators.

Information technology plays a key role in teaching, learning and research support. While the Office of Information Technology has extended the range and scope of its activity, the University needs to clarify role and mission as well as develop a sustainable funding model to meet continued future growth in this area.

Standard Six
Governance and Administration

The University of Nevada Las Vegas is a constituent unit of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), governed by a Board of Regents whose members are elected to their positions and representative of the public interest, and is led by a president invested with appropriate executive power and responsibilities. The president reports to the chancellor of the NSHE and works collaboratively with him and the other presidents of the system. The Mission of UNLV was approved by the Board in 2008 and guides the operations of the university. In discharging its responsibilities, the Board of Regents observes appropriate protocols, including review of all program proposals and reductions, approval of the annual budget and long-range financial plan, review of periodic fiscal audit reports, and review of its own performance and that of the university’s president. In the course of the committee’s on-campus visit, the chair of the Board of Regents met with representatives of the Commission on Colleges and Universities.

As is often the case in a multi-campus system, clarification of the mission of the several institutions is an almost chronic issue. While steps have been taken to distinguish the respective roles of UNLV and the University of Nevada Reno, further efforts will likely be called for as fiscal challenges for both institutions become more acute. As each confronts the need to refocus programs and services, it will be especially important that a clear channel of communication is open between the two presidents and that their work is guided and supported by the chancellor and the Board. At the same time, and on the UNLV campus, particularly with its relatively high turnover of mid- to upper-level administrators, it is vitally important that interim appointments either be regularized or new appointments made. In the committee’s estimation, campus recognition of and support for necessary budgetary adjustments is offset to a significant extent by concern at the current number of interim positions within the university.

Of particular importance to the UNLV community, especially in light of the circumstances attending the abrupt reassignment of the former president in July 2009 is the regularization of the process of presidential evaluation and appointment in an environment of Nevada’s stringent open meeting laws. As the self study itself puts it, “The lessons learned hopefully suggest that the Board of Regents will evaluate how it implements its evaluation procedures to ensure a humane process is carried out in an open meeting law environment, one that benefits not only the individual’s professional development but also one that considers the university’s and NSHE’s reputation.” The committee would strongly endorse this judgment.
In response to the findings of earlier accreditation visitors, the university has made significant improvements to its communication facilities. Based on its interviews, this committee would note that the UNLV community is still just small enough to have the expectation that members will be knowledgeable about campus matters but still large enough that full satisfaction of all constituents will remain a challenge. The current president is fully committed to transparency and participation; this should bring the campus expectation closer to realization. As budget related decisions are taken, especially in this period of fiscal constraint, such communication is of paramount importance.

**With respect to classified staff, the committee notes their distinctive status as members of the state personnel system, and therefore, not strictly employees of UNLV. In spite of this, the committee observed a very high degree of support for current budgetary and planning activities and an uncommonly high morale, this notwithstanding the fact that state-imposed furloughs fell first on this group of employees.**

**Standard Seven**

**Finance**

Both the State of Nevada and the governing board appear to have given UNLV sufficient and appropriate autonomy in financial planning and budgetary matters within overall mandates and priorities. The State appropriates operating funding for UNLV on a lump-sum basis via six discrete appropriations that gives the university significant latitude in the deployment of these resources within each of the following appropriations: 1) Main campus – funded by a funding formula largely driven by enrollment (~$155M in 2009-10); Boyd School of Law (~$8M in 2009-10); 3) School of Dental Medicine (~$8M in 2009-10); 4) Intercollegiate Athletics (~$8M in 2009-10); 5) Business Center South – a support center at UNLV to serve the administrative needs of Nevada State College, the College of Southern Nevada, as well as UNLV (~$2M in 2009-10); and 6) Statewide Programs for Continuing Education, UNLV Museum and the Center for Business and Economic Research (~$1M in 2009-10). However, these appropriations were reduced by 6.9% in a special legislative session held in February/March 2010. The amounts shown above are before such reductions.

Capital funding from the State is limited, yet when available, is earmarked to specific projects as requested by the university. Capital improvement funding comes from earmarked property tax revenues; however, due to significant declines in the residential real estate market, this source of funding will be challenged in the short term. Most capital is funded by donations or revenue bonds sold by the university with tuition, fee or auxiliary revenues pledged for repayment. The governing board is very conscious of its role and is very careful not to intrude into the management discretion needed by the university to achieve its mission.

The institution has a financial planning and budget processes that are strategically guided by and consistent with the Physical Master plan of the university, the Academic Master plan and the program and capital projects budgets. This is a good process that focuses the university around key goals relating to Board objectives and performance measures that are critical to fulfillment of the university’s strategic
plans and mission. Unfortunately, as of late, most budgets have been negative resulting in administrative and academic cuts and this will likely manifest into program reductions or closures.

UNLV is in the process of implementing the Peoplesoft product suite, starting with the student information module. The finance and human resource modules will be implemented but due to financial uncertainties the timeline is not certain at present. The current finance and human resource systems are legacy systems written in COBOL. These systems are supplemented by a web-based data warehouse updated with daily extracts to do ad hoc queries and to obtain needed management information. Budget reports are generally available to appropriate constituencies and users and budget revisions are made promptly by the budget office.

UNLV does not have the authority to issue debt without the express approval of the Nevada System of Higher Education Board. The Board has a debt policy guiding the use of debt, but this policy does not contain an express debt limit as required by NWCCU Standard 7.A.4. Thus, it is recommended that such a debt limit be developed and adopted by the Board. Higher education standards suggest an upper threshold for a debt burden ratio (total annual principal and interest payments divided by total operating expenses) at 7%, however, a number of institutions operate effectively with a higher ratio according to KPMG, Prager Sealy and Co. LLC (Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education, 6th Edition).

Because debt service represents required payments from the operating budget, a higher debt burden ratio indicates that the institution has less flexibility to manage its remaining resources. Institutions with greater budget flexibility or more diverse sources of revenues will find more comfort in operating with a debt burden ratio higher than 7%; however, public institutions with less control over revenues generally prefer lower debt burden thresholds. It was clear from the analysis presented and the conversations with institutional leaders that the institution is closely planning and monitoring future use of debt and debt burden to ensure that a prudent level of debt is maintained. Currently, UNLV’s debt burden is slightly above 4% as shown below. Thus, this is a very modest rate and there is nothing to suggest that the institution would not be able to meet its debt obligations in either the short or long run. Further, this amount of debt does not cause concern that debt payments would present an unreasonable strain on resources available for educational purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debt Burden Ratio</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Principal + Interest on debt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal paid on capital debt/leases</td>
<td>$11,162,000</td>
<td>$10,804,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest paid on capital debt/leases</td>
<td>$10,606,000</td>
<td>$10,675,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
<td>$494,532,000</td>
<td>$495,855,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio: Annual debt payments/operating</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Like most institutions of higher education, UNLV would like to have more resources to continue to serve the growing demand for higher education services and expand its research agenda in achievement of its plans and mission. However, the recession has hit Nevada particularly hard and state revenues have been declining of late. Nevertheless, management has done a good job of planning for this downturn by focusing on: 1) improved student retention 2) fee and tuition increases, including the possibility of differential fees/tuition in certain high demand programs; 3) forging new agreements with the Legislature regarding the amount of fees used in calculating the state supported budget; 4) increased private fundraising; and 5) building reserves and making strategic decisions to make both horizontal and vertical cuts or otherwise deploy reserves to manage through the transition to a more focused mission and program mix. These strategies appear to have mitigated many of the revenue losses and should allow the institution to continue to make progress in their plans. Like any strategy to diversify revenues or otherwise manage during these difficult times some of these activities have or will yield more benefit than others. Nevertheless, all seem to have been undertaken with good intentions, represent prudent stewardship on behalf of the institution’s leadership and are appropriate to the mission, goals and priorities of the university.

The current sources of revenues for the university over the last two years are as follows:

**UNLV**

**Summary of Major Revenues**

**2007 – 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type:</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>% Total</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>% Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating Revenues:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Tuition and Fees (net)</td>
<td>$135,715,000</td>
<td>27.88%</td>
<td>$122,063,000</td>
<td>24.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants and Contracts</td>
<td>$85,662,000</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
<td>$97,449,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales and Services - Educ. Departments</td>
<td>$24,700,000</td>
<td>5.07%</td>
<td>$24,616,000</td>
<td>4.88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales and Services - Auxiliary Enterprises</td>
<td>$43,091,000</td>
<td>8.85%</td>
<td>$43,174,000</td>
<td>8.56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Operating Revenues</td>
<td>$5,272,000</td>
<td>1.08%</td>
<td>$4,531,000</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Revenues</td>
<td>$294,440,000</td>
<td>60.50%</td>
<td>$291,833,000</td>
<td>57.88%</td>
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</table>
Non-Operating:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Appropriated</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Appropriations</td>
<td>$198,680,000</td>
<td>40.82%</td>
<td>$195,667,000</td>
<td>38.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>$15,172,000</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
<td>$13,547,000</td>
<td>2.69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investment Income</td>
<td>($28,087,000)</td>
<td>-5.77%</td>
<td>$2,781,000</td>
<td>0.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$16,333,000</td>
<td>1.33%</td>
<td>$386,000</td>
<td>0.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Non-operating Revenues</td>
<td>$192,260,000</td>
<td>39.50%</td>
<td>$212,381,000</td>
<td>42.12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Revenues               | $486,700,000 | 100.00%| $504,214,000 | 100.00%|

Source: UNLV Financial Statements

As the above table shows, the university has fairly diverse and balanced sources of revenues with state appropriations being the most significant. The university is heavily reliant on funding from State appropriated sources, with this revenue source comprising nearly 41% of total revenues in Fiscal Year 2009. This source of funding is likely to decrease in the future thereby necessitating greater reliance on other sources of support, with tuition and fees likely to increase in the future to offset the reductions in state support assuming needed changes are made in the state funding formulas so this becomes more than a zero sum change. Tuition and fees are the other major source of revenues comprising 28% of total revenues in Fiscal Year 2009. The remaining revenues come from grants and contracts; sales and services; gifts; and investment income.

According to the State Higher Education Finance (SHEF), a division of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) association, in 2008-09 Nevada had the eighth highest State appropriation funding per student in the nation at $8,781 per student FTE. The national average in 2008-09 was $6,928 per student FTE. These data contain state appropriations for all postsecondary institutions in the state, including community colleges. As Nevada community colleges receive no property tax revenues, whereas many other states do, this may tend to exaggerate the state funding amounts for Nevada, nevertheless through 2008-09, the State of Nevada has been fairly generous in funding its postsecondary institutions as compared to other states. In terms of net tuition per student FTE Nevada was the 43rd lowest in the nation at $2,509 per FTE, while the national average was $4,108 in 2008-09. In terms of total educational revenues (combining state appropriations with net tuition per student FTE) Nevada was 28th in the nation at $11,290 per student FTE slightly above the national average of $10,998 per student FTE in 2008-09. In reviewing these amounts, one could conclude that UNLV could raise its tuition significantly and still be competitive.

There appear to be minimal inter-fund borrowings, with the exceptions involving capital improvements needed by the athletics department. All inter-fund loans are documented in a loan agreement signed by both parties with due date and interest rates clearly defined in these agreements.
The institution did identify sources for student financial aid, including the new policy set forth by the Board of Regents requiring a minimum of 15% of increased fees be set aside for financial aid. Luckily, as noted above, UNLV has fairly low tuition and being located in a vibrant metropolitan area, many students can find jobs to work while they attend the institution.

As is shown in the following table, the university currently has a primary reserve ratio (ratio of expendable net assets to total operating expenses) of 31% which signifies substantial reserves compared with the recommended higher education benchmark levels in the 5%-15% range.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Reserve Ratio</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>$153,699,000</td>
<td>$119,009,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Expenses</td>
<td>$494,532,000</td>
<td>$495,855,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio: Unrest. NA/Operating Expenses</td>
<td>31.08%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNLV Financial Statements

In addition, the current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) has been steadily increasing, indicating that the institution has increased its liquidity and short term financial position over the last three years. Declining liquidity is the first indicator of financial challenges, thus to date UNLV has done a good job of strengthening its financial position in preparation for the future uncertainties associated with the State’s economic challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Ratio</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td>$239,228,000</td>
<td>$207,361,000</td>
<td>$196,222,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td>$80,645,000</td>
<td>$80,361,000</td>
<td>$91,480,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio Assets: Liabilities</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNLV Financial Statements

The university financial statements for the last five years indicate that UNLV has lived within its means and is doing a good job of maintaining or enhancing its financial position over this time period despite noticeable declines in state funding over the last year or so. No significant deficits were experienced during this period and a significant reserve of net assets has accumulated. The institution’s carefully planning; strong enrollment demand; increasing private support, low tuition compared to peers and neighboring states; and enhanced reserves mitigate concerns regarding the adequacy of resources being available to meet operating needs or debt obligations in the current budget biennia. However, projections for 2011-13 show significant shortfalls in State funding, currently projected in the worst case in the 40-50% range of continuing service level requirements. Many believe that this gap will be
reduced significantly by tax increases, cost shifts, other reductions and the uptick of the State’s economy which was noted in the January 2010 economic forecast. Again, like many institutions of higher education today, UNLV could use added resources to serve growing enrollments and research activities; however, with the possible exception of funding for increased research activities, there was no indication that funding was so constrained as to prohibit management from continuing to meet its needs and make modest progress in its plans. This is not to say that reductions will be unnecessary; only that management activities suggest that they will be proactive in planning and addressing such needs.

The state provides approximately $8 million in general fund support to subsidize athletics. The institution assesses auxiliaries and other self-supporting activities 3.5% of revenues in service fees to reimburse for the general fund for administrative costs incurred for supporting these activities. Thus, these funding authorizations and service charge transfers appear to demonstrate an understanding of the appropriate financial relationship between the general fund and ancillary services operations and their respective contributions to the overall mission of the university.

The President or his designee regularly briefs the governing board about the financial condition of the university at board meetings. These reports ensure that the governing board and campus leadership have the information needed to maintain financial adequacy and stability of the university and through these processes help university administrators keep their fingers on the financial pulse of the institution. Reports to the Board include status of revenues and expenses as compared to budgets, complete with projections for remainder of the fiscal period.

All financial functions are centralized under a vice president of finance and administration whom reports to the president. The vice president for finance is a seasoned administrator who holds the requisite qualifications, and experience required for this level of responsibility. In addition, the Controller is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who reports directly to the vice president for finance and administration. Both of these individuals have significant experience at the university. The finance functions appear to be well planned with an appropriate alignment of responsibilities and many policies, procedures and processes in place to maintain sound internal controls within the institution. As noted above, in 2008-09 UNLV had in excess of $486.7 million in total revenues from all sources. Given this magnitude of revenues and the fact that the university operates programs at multiple sites throughout Nevada and overseas contract programs the financial activities of the university are fairly complex.

All expenditures and income appear to be controlled by the institution and are included in regular planning, budgeting, accounting and auditing procedures and reports. The University currently has policies governing cash handling, change funds and petty cash funds. All treasury functions including cash and investment management policies and functions reside at the system level as university cash accounts are swept daily into a central bank managed by the Chancellor’s staff. The institution’s accounting system follows generally accepted accounting principles. This is noted in the annual external audit that is performed by Grant-Thorton in 2009 (and Moss-Adams in prior years) and the university has received unqualified audit opinions regarding the fair presentation of the financial position, in all material respects in each of the last five years with no significant management letter issues.
Independent external audits are performed annually by a firm that is selected by the governing board using a request for proposals.

The University has an active internal audit function and program. This function reports to the University Vice President for Finance, however, the Chancellor also has a system level internal audit function that reports directly to the Board, including a statewide fraud hotline and other services. Thus, both UNLV and the system-office understand the importance of internal audit and control structures, and have devoted sufficient resources to ensure all operations are compliant with institutional, board, state and federal policies/regulations as well as generally accepted accounting principles and practices.

UNLV recently completed its first ever capital campaign and was successful in raising in excess of $500 million, despite a weakening economy. This indicates strong support for the university among its alums and friends. This is a powerful indication of the level of support enjoyed by the university in the Las Vegas community, in greater Nevada and around the globe. The university’s fundraising activities are governed by institutional and Board policies that comply with governmental requirements and appear to be conducted in a professional and ethical manner. Endowments are managed by either the Chancellor’s Office for gifts received prior to the founding of the UNLV Foundation or by the Foundation Board (for gifts received subsequent to the Foundation’s founding) following investment guidelines that were approved by the governing board of the Foundation and in compliance with State Board guidelines. The Foundation maintains complete records regarding these funds and has annual audits, thus appears to be in compliance with applicable legal requirements in this regard.

The Foundation has investment policies and guidelines that are overseen by the Foundation Board and staff, or consultants with appropriate qualifications. These policies are also in accordance with Board of Regents policies. Although the Board of Regents has policies governing the relationships between universities and affiliated foundation, there was no signed agreement (other than Board of regents’ policies) specifying the nature of such between UNLV and the UNLV Foundation. While this appears to conform to NWCCU standard 7.D.3. the institution may wish, if appropriate, to develop an agreement with the foundation to clarify such relationship and avoid any misunderstandings.

**Standard Eight**

**Physical Resources**

Instructional and support facilities appear to be adequate in design, quantity, maintenance and management to achieve the university’s mission and goals. Physical observation and conversations with students, faculty and staff confirmed that facilities are adequately furnished for instruction, work, study, and research, although there were some concerns expressed by faculty in this last area. The facilities are well maintained and monitored with regard to health and safety and are fully accessible by the physically disabled. Facilities are tested routinely for air and water quality and are all within government standards. Virtually all facilities are sprinklered and have emergency exit lighting and other safety features in the event of catastrophic events.
The main campus is very attractive, with aesthetically pleasing designs and is located in the heart of a very vibrant city that adds to its ambiance. All facilities appeared to be well maintained and create a very pleasant atmosphere that is conducive to teaching, learning and research. It is obvious from the appearance of the campus that all university employees and the residents of Las Vegas take great pride in their campus environ.

The main UNLV campus comprises 332 acres of land and at all locations UNLV maintains 5.0 million square feet of space. Deferred maintenance levels are being monitored and at present are estimated at $140 million. This is an area that will need to be closely monitored in the coming years as the facilities and systems are aging and are used quite extensively by a growing student population and research active faculty. In addition, as noted above state funding may be limited in the future thus this deferred maintenance backlog could grow further if not addressed.

Although locations off the main campus were not visited during the course of this review, indications are that these facilities are also maintained to state and federal standards as most are public facilities operated by other local, state or federal governmental entities.

Suitable equipment appeared to be available and well maintained in order to meet the achievement of UNLV’s education and research goals. Students reported great satisfaction with computer, classroom and laboratory equipment and they participate in an advisory committee in the allocation of technology fee revenues. Plans indicate that most computer workstations are to be replaced every four years, however, current funding levels may challenge the institution’s ability to meet this goal. Again, this is an area that will need to be monitored and plans formulated to address this situation and ensure that appropriate and current technologies remain available for academic, research and administrative functions.

The university is designated as a Large Quantity Generator of hazardous waste. This is a costly and sensitive area that the University has monitored closely and they have implemented training, inspection, collection, transportation and disposal programs to deal with these issues and control the costs of managing this hazard. This process appeared to be in compliance with governmental standards and follows prescribed procedures.

The university has a master plan for campus physical development that looks into the future and is aligned with the mission and the long-range educational and research plans of the institution. This plan was last updated in 2004 and 2007, yet is constantly being reviewed and tweaked to add new elements, such as new buildings funded by donors, energy system management, etc. Facilities plans include the development of new facilities, major renovations and acquisition of new properties for future expansion. Planning includes accommodation for the physically impaired and appropriate safety and security arrangements. Governing board members, the president’s cabinet and deans are involved in the planning and approval processes for physical facilities. Progress is being made in creating greater transit options for students, faculty and staff and the institution, working with the local transit agency, has applied for a federal grant to create a transit center on campus.
In addition, the university is to be commended for placing greater emphasis on water and energy conservation. Significant progress has been made by replacing grass with desert landscaping or artificial turf to conserve water and updating outdated HVAC systems, creating mini-loops for chilled and hot water to serve multiple buildings, installing new technologies in energy management and in otherwise managing operations to significantly reduce energy consumption. The institution has received state awards for energy efficiency and landscape design and a national energy efficiency and management award from American Physical Plant Association (APPA) for their work in these areas. It is clear that the physical plant staff take a great deal of pride in their work and their campus. The plant staff have significant experience in this area and have saved the campus in excess of $11 million in energy and water costs over the last seven years. This is only one example noted during the visitation where the university has made intelligent decisions to maximize its precious resources and demonstrate prudent stewardship of public resources.

**Standard Nine**  
**Institutional Integrity**

It is the expectation of Commission Standard Nine that an institution will adhere “...to the highest ethical standards in its representation to its constituencies and the public; in its teaching, scholarship, and service; in its treatment of its students, faculty, and staff; and in its relationships with regulatory and accrediting agencies.” In the judgment of the Evaluation Committee, compliance with these principles is a vigorous and sustained commitment on the part of all parties. The University's own policies and procedures have been revised in light of new requirements – especially conflict of interest matters – established by the Board of Regents. In all appropriate areas, the University is setting very high standards. Indeed, the Evaluation Committee repeatedly commented on the “culture of integrity” that characterizes the institution.

**Commendations**

1. The Committee commends the University for its exceptional sense of community and solidarity in the face of literally unprecedented fiscal challenges. The administration’s and Senate’s commitment to transparency and inclusiveness in critical planning, while unlikely to mitigate the impact of eventual program and service adjustments, is essential to an ongoing process of broad-based, continuous planning and evaluation. (Standard 1.B)

2. The Committee commends the University for the extremely successful completion of its “Invent the Future” Capital Campaign. The goal reached represents not only a milestone in philanthropic support for the mission of the University -- specifically its support of scholarships and strategic investments in research-- but also is reflective of the many local, regional, and national constituencies that see the institution as a worthy investment vehicle for the growth and development of Nevada. (Standard 7.D)
3. The Committee commends the University, in particular its libraries, on the establishment of a highly effective and robust program of assessment data gathering that is used on an ongoing basis to improve resources and services, their leadership in promoting greater information literacy as an integral part of the student learning experience, and their exemplary commitment to providing modern and spacious library facilities in support of teaching and research. (Standard 5.C.1 and 5.E)

4. The Committee commends the University for its lead role in a partnership to establish the Clinical Simulation Center on the Shadow Lane campus. This state-of-the art facility, shared by the UNLV School of Nursing, The University of Nevada School of Medicine, and the Nevada State College School of Nursing, provides superb learning experiences for nursing, medical, and other health sciences students along with health care providers in the community, and in so doing facilitates interdisciplinary collaborations which ultimately enhance the quality of health care across the region. (Standard 8.A.6)

5. The Committee commends the University, in particular its William S. Boyd School of Law, for its remarkable success reaching out to the Las Vegas and greater Nevada communities through its Thomas and Mack Legal Clinic, the Saltman Center for Conflict Resolution, and the Externship program. Through these exemplary programs, the University demonstrates its commitment to service learning, the development of reflective practitioners, and mutually beneficial partnerships with the larger community. (Standard 2.G.1 and 2.G.3)

6. The Committee commends the University, in particular its Division of Educational Outreach, on its successful restructuring and embracing of the role as a revenue center for the institution. The successful cultivation and use of partnerships, both internally and externally, greatly enhances the likelihood of the Division’s continuing success. (Standard 2.G.1)

7. The committee commends the University for placing significant emphasis on water and energy conservation. The institution has received state awards for its energy efficiency and landscape designs and was recently selected for a national energy efficiency and management award from American Physical Plant Association (APPA) for their work in these areas. It is clear that the physical plant staff take a great deal of pride in their work and that this work is saving the university millions of dollars while conserving the environment for generations to come. (Standard 8.C)

**Recommendations**

1. The Committee notes that since the 2007 Focused Interim Evaluation Visit significant but uneven progress has been made across the University with respect to educational assessment. However, in order to ensure that data gathered truly lead to appropriate course and program renewal, it is recommended that such additional steps be taken to assign responsibility for implementation at the appropriate administrative level (for example the deans of the schools
and colleges) as will lead to full implementation of and accountability for the University’s policies on student learning assessment. (Standard 2.B and Policy 2.2)

2. The Committee notes the University’s stated intention of becoming a “Very High Research” institution and that this goal is consistent with UNLV’s Mission and strategic priorities. At the same time, the Committee observes that budget reductions and attendant program and services adjustments have resulted in a serious decline in support services to faculty seeking or administering extramural funding. This, combined with increased teaching loads (as a result of further budget restrictions), appears to compromise the realization of this priority. The Committee therefore recommends the University ensure policies, structures, and resources adequate to meet the needs of such research programs and activities are deemed to be consistent with and extensions of the University’s distinctive mission, a mission so critical to the economic and cultural environment of Nevada. (Standard 7.B.5)