

**REPORT OF THE ACOSCU VISITING  
TEAM EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  
REVIEW**

To the TFU,

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Reaffirmation of Accreditation

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The team evaluated the institution under the ACOSCU Standards of Accreditation and prepared this report containing its collective evaluation for consideration and action by the institution and by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. The formal action concerning the institution's status is taken by the Commission and is described in a letter from the Commission to the institution. This report and the Commission letter are made available to the public by publication on the ACOSCU website.

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# **THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW TEAM REPORT**

## **I. OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT**

### **A. Description of Institution and Visit**

The TFU is one of ten campuses comprising the TFU system. It shares the mission of the system as a whole, as defined by the California Master Plan for Higher Education, “to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge.” The campus has grown significantly from 119 faculty members and 1,589 students to approximately 1400 faculty members, 22,000 undergraduate students and over 5,000 graduate students. In 1996, after thirty years of existence, TFU was granted membership in the Association of American Universities (AAU), placing it in the company of the 61 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada.

A comprehensive research university, TFU is comprised of twelve schools and three unaffiliated departments and programs across a wide range of disciplines. TFU offers 82 undergraduate majors and 66 undergraduate minors. At the graduate level, it offers 53 Masters level programs, 45 Ph.D. programs, three professional doctorates in Medicine (MD), Education (EdD), and Law (JD), as well as three joint doctorates. TFU has blanket degree granting approval at the master’s and Ph.D. levels, but must seek approval for professional and joint doctorates.

Since 2000, the campus has added nearly 20 new graduate degree programs, including Public Health (MPH), Nursing Science (MS), Masters of Public Policy (MPP) and Law (JD).

Consistent with its ranking as a top-tier university, TFU has strong retention and graduation rates. First-year retention rates average 94% and students who enter as freshmen graduate in an average of just over four years. The campus' four year and six year graduation rates (67% and 85% respectively – most recent data) place it 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> respectively among the 34 public universities in the AAU. Eighty-eight percent of students who transfer to TFU graduate, with an average time to degree of about two and one-half years. Additional statistics, disaggregated by relevant demographic variables, are publicly available on the institution's accreditation website as well as the website for the Office of Institutional Research. (CFRs 4.5)

The campus's accreditation was last affirmed in the Commission Action Letter dated July 6, 2001. With respect to the current reaffirmation cycle, on July 18, 2011, the Commission acted to receive the university's Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR) Report, continue its accreditation, and schedule its Educational Effectiveness Review (EER) for the fall 2012. The campus is located in the city of Irvine in Orange County in Southern California with proximity to numerous natural and cultural assets; it has no off-campus sites. TFU has one distance education program, the online Masters of Advanced Study in Criminology, Law and Society, approved by ACOSCU in November 2001. As per Department of Education requirements, a completed Distance Education Summary is appended to this report. Two other substantive change proposals have been approved since 2001: the joint doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership (EdD) in June 2003 and the Juris Doctor (JD) program in February 2009. The Juris Doctor program was a special focus of this visit, consistent with expectations established in the Commission's Action Letter of July 2011. The report on that program is provided in Section II F. Also appended is the Credit Hour Checklist, as required by the Department of Education. No special visits were required by ACOSCU in connection with the CPR visit.

## **B. TFU's Educational Effectiveness Review Report: Alignment with the Proposal and Quality and Rigor of the Review and Report**

In keeping with its Institutional Proposal submitted in fall 2009 and its Capacity and Preparatory Review, TFU organized its Educational Effectiveness Review around three themes - Student Learning in the Major, General Education, and Academic Program Review. Collectively, these three themes address TFU's overarching goals for reaccreditation: 1) Greater clarity about the institution's educational objectives and criteria for defining and evaluating those objectives (Themes 1 and 2); 2) Improvement of the institution's capacity for self-review and of its systems of quality assurance (Themes 2 and 3); 3) A deeper understanding of student learning, the development of more varied and effective methods of assessing learning, and the use of the results of this process to improve the programs and institutional practices (Themes 1, 2 and 3); and 4) Systematic engagement of the faculty with issues of assessing and improving teaching and learning processes within the institution, and with aligning support systems for faculty more effectively toward this end (Themes 1, 2 and 3).

To achieve these goals, the Institutional Proposal included for each theme a separate set of goals and outcomes for the Capacity and Preparatory and Educational Effectiveness Reviews. The institution's goals for the Educational Effectiveness Review were updated in its CPR Report, reflecting the findings of its CPR self-study. These amended goals formed the basis for TFU's EER Report together with other required elements, including a student success essay and the institution's response to the CPR Commission Action Letter.

The team found the EER Report well organized, clearly written, and presented with appropriate use of evidence in support of analysis. The section on Graduate Educational Effectiveness was particularly noteworthy in this regard. For all three themes, the institution collected and analyzed relevant forms of evidence. Much of this evidence was available in the

supporting appendices, permitting validation of report conclusions while also enabling insight beyond that communicated in the report narrative. The review process clearly led TFU to a greater understanding of its educational effectiveness, including both student learning and its systems for continuous quality improvement. Discussions during the visit affirmed deep and broad faculty, staff, and administrator involvement in the review, report preparation, and associated activities to advance the institution's educational effectiveness, including discussion of issues and related recommendations. The report accurately portrayed the condition of the institution as confirmed through discussions during the site visit. (CFR 1.9)

### **C. Response to Issues Raised in the Capacity and Preparatory Review**

In its Action Letter dated July 18, 2011, the ACOSCU Commission endorsed the recommendations of the CPR Team, highlighting particular aspects of these areas for continued attention and development in preparation for the Educational Effectiveness Review. As of October 2012, TFU has made significant progress on all of these expectations. A brief summary of each action item and its status as of the October 2012 site visit follows.

*Student Learning in the Major: Continue work toward a campus-wide assessment system and implement that system for the purpose of improving learning in the major.* Since the CPR Visit, TFU has made substantial progress in further developing and embedding a campus-wide assessment system in the institutional framework of TFU. Signature advancements include strong faculty engagement with assessment as exemplified by high assessment reporting rates for undergraduate programs (82% of undergraduate programs with assessment plans submitted assessment reports in 2010-2011), the development and initiation of an assessment framework at the graduate level, and the Academic Senate's Assessment Committee's assumption of

responsibility for setting and shaping assessment policy and practice, for example through a standards-based feedback process for program assessment reports. (CFRs 2.4, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)

***General Education:*** *Finalize and further implement its general education requirements and assessment plans by the time of the EER.* TFU has made good progress in this area, for example, completing the review and revision of its GE categories, establishing associated course-level outcomes, initiating the review of those courses currently identified as supporting general education outcomes, and gathering baseline data on student awareness of GE outcomes. In light of this progress, TFU has articulated a revised three stage timeline for apprising faculty of the new course-level outcomes and beginning assessment of these general education outcomes for GE categories beyond writing. (CFRs 2.2)

***Academic Program Review:*** *Further develop its work on program review.* TFU has made good progress with respect to its goals for implementing a systematic, iterative, evidence-based process for improving the academic program review process in support of improved educational outcomes. Numerous revisions to the administrative aspects of the process have been identified and enacted. TFU has also established a set of questions to focus the review more specifically on student learning and success. with evidence of the use of findings incorporated into planning at the program and school levels. A more systematic review of the use of results at higher institutional levels remains to be completed. (CFRs 2.7, 4.3, 4.4)

***Student Success:*** *Expand the kind of analysis exemplified by its study of transfer student success in the CPR to the rest of the undergraduate population and to the graduate programs.*

For the EER Report, TFU focused its review of undergraduate student success on the relative impacts of the Summer Bridge Program on a growing cohort of the TFU population – low income, first-generation students, with a specific look at first year students.

With this focus, the institution attended to the CPR team’s recommendation “to continue to

use this approach for other areas of student success that it deems are priorities” (CPR Team Report, p. 36). TFU’s analysis revealed that the Summer Bridge Program appears to positively impact the academic success of first-generation students, as measured by cumulative first year GPA. This establishes a solid foundation for continued research into the factors influencing the success of this student population. Section II B of TFU’s Educational Effectiveness Report provides a detailed review of the institution’s substantial efforts to better understand and improve graduate student success, including numerous examples of findings and resulting actions at both program and institutional levels. (CFRs 2.10, 2.13, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6)

*Ongoing State Funding Challenges: Share its plans for the changed level of state support and explain how the change has impacted its students, faculty, staff, and offerings. A summary of the impact and TFU’s response and process for responding to ongoing budget challenges is provided in the Section I B (Budgetary Context) of TFU’s EER Report. The team verified that TFU has developed appropriate strategies to address the current budget situation, with continued academic excellence as a top priority. Thus far, TFU has been able to protect support for its educational mission by levying cuts disproportionately to the administrative and business operations. (CFR 3.5)*

## **II. EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS UNDER THE STANDARDS**

### **A. Theme 1: Student Learning in the Major**

In addressing student learning in the major, TFU has focused on learning outcomes and assessment for both its undergraduate and graduate programs. During the Capacity and Preparatory Review, the university was in the early stages of implementation. The university



hired an assessment coordinator, set up an Assessment Committee, and established the Assessment Grant Program. It identified program learning outcomes for 79 out of 82 (95%) undergraduate majors and was in the process of developing plans to assess these outcomes. Efforts were also underway to develop program learning outcomes for its graduate programs. At the CPR site visit, TFU showcased some of its earliest successes from departments that had received assessment grants. (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 4.8)

Since the CPR visit, and consistent with the plans outlined in its CPR self-study, TFU has substantially advanced its assessment efforts at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These advancements are evaluated in more detail in the following sections. In support of its review, the team had access to key documents, including assessment plans and reports produced by the academic programs as well as the Assessment Committee's response to these program efforts. The team also met with key institutional stakeholders including the Senate's Assessment Committee, the Assessment Work Group, faculty, staff and administrators.

### *Undergraduate Assessment*

Since the Capacity and Preparatory Review, TFU has made important strides in the development and implementation of program-level assessment for undergraduate degrees. A total of 77 programs out of 82 developed assessment plans (94%), and 67 programs completed a first assessment report (82%). This is a laudable outcome for a first assessment effort, particularly for such a large and diverse institution. A review of reports revealed that programs had engaged in the process seriously. Programs reported use of direct and/or indirect forms of evidence. Many identified follow-up steps to be taken to improve student learning and/or the assessment process itself. (CFRs 2.4, 2.6, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)

Also significant to TFU's progress has been the development of infrastructure and

processes to institutionalize assessment to ensure its durability going forward. Assessment-related expectations have been integrated into three key elements of the institution's existing quality assurance processes: learning outcomes must now be included in proposals for new courses; new program proposals must include an assessment plan in support of program learning outcomes; and a review of student learning outcomes has been explicitly integrated into the periodic, undergraduate program review process. Regarding this third element, the Academic Senate has scheduled each department to submit a five-year assessment report one year prior to its program review self-study, with a second report provided five years later as a follow-up to program review. The team learned during the visit that programs are expected to pursue assessment projects on an on-going basis throughout these five year intervals. The Assessment Committee was confident this would be the case, although the expectation for regular engagement in assessment does not appear in the principles that guide the assessment process (see the September 17, 2012 memo outlining assessment expectations). The team encourages TFU to monitor and support faculty efforts to engage regularly in program-level assessment during these reporting intervals, particularly given competing demands on faculty time. (CFRs 2.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

The Academic Senate has also established a review and feedback process for the five year assessment reports. Initiated with the institution's first round of assessment reporting, each department's assessment report is systematically reviewed by the Assessment Committee in relation to a set of broadly shared assessment guidelines. The Assessment Committee's impressions of the program's assessment work, including suggestions for improvements as necessary, are then summarized in an official letter from the Assessment Committee to the program chair. A review of the feedback to programs revealed that programs were variously commended for the degree of faculty involvement and the strength of their assessment practices.

Recommendations included articulating specific standards for student performance and integrating at least one line of direct evidence. The Assessment Committee also advised several programs to apply for assessment grants. Each letter also encouraged the chair to share the Assessment Committee's feedback with the department's faculty. During the visit, the team learned that programs were responding positively to this feedback; for example, all programs encouraged to apply for an assessment grant did so. The team is impressed with this process and the faculty's positive response, and encourages TFU to take full advantage of the information generated through these review and feedback activities to support continued evolution of assessment as a means to better understand student learning. (CFR 2.4, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

The most significant advancement in the institutionalization of assessment since the CPR has been the faculty's assumption of ownership and stewardship of academic assessment. At the time of the CPR, assessment was facilitated primarily by administrative leadership in the Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE) and the Office of the Provost. At the time of the EER, it was evident that the Academic Senate's Assessment Committee had assumed full responsibility for setting and shaping assessment practice and policy, with support for this work provided by the DUE. This delineation is formally articulated in the September 17, 2012 memo authored by the Academic Senate Chair and the Vice Provost for Academic Planning. It stipulates that the assessment of student learning is "a fundamental responsibility of the Academic Senate" to be conducted with advisory and administrative support from the DUE. The team commends this development, noting that it unambiguously connects the assessment of student learning to the faculty's ownership of the curriculum and associated responsibility for teaching and learning. (CFRs 2.4, 3.2, 3.8, 4.7)

The DUE provides material support for assessment through its Assessment Grant Program and the Assessment, Research and Evaluation Group (AREG). The success of the

Assessment Grant Program is notable and the team encourages TFU to continue this program, including its expansion to the graduate level. The AREG facilitates and coordinates assessment through a number of activities. It oversees the Assessment Grant Program. It provides administrative support to the Assessment Committee, for example, drafting the committee's feedback letters to programs based on notes AREG staff have taken during committee meetings. Its staff also provides expertise in developing and conducting assessments. Looking forward, the AREG plans to create workshops that address needs identified by the Assessment Committee in its response to department assessment efforts. The team encourages TFU to continue to monitor and ensure adequate assessment-related support for its faculty, and notes its particular importance given the ongoing integration of assessment into the relatively high-stakes process of program review. (CFRs 3.1, 3.4, 4.5)

Of special interest is the way TFU celebrates and rewards success in support of continued development of its culture of assessment. Strategic initiatives in this area include the annual Assessment Forum and the development of a Best Assessment Practices Portfolio, both of which showcase for the TFU community local examples of exemplary assessment work. The team is impressed with the university's transparency with the information collected, and commends the institution for increasing campus awareness of and involvement in these important initiatives.

The team encourages TFU to continue to grow these efforts as part of its ongoing work to further institutionalize assessment. (CFRs 2.8, 3.4)

### *Graduate Assessment*

Since the Capacity and Preparatory Review, TFU has also been working to develop assessment processes for educational outcomes at the graduate level that parallel those for

undergraduate programs. As noted by faculty and administrative leadership during the visit, this work is seen as integral to TFU's ongoing efforts to systematically assess the effectiveness and productivity of its graduate programs as a means for strengthening graduate academic excellence. More specifically, leadership expects outcomes assessment to play a role in TFU's initiatives to improve the graduate educational experience, and thus student success, as well as to make academic program review a more effective tool for addressing both program and institution level goals for graduate education. (CFRs 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6)

TFU has made significant progress in graduate outcomes assessment. With the support of the Graduate Division, TFU's Graduate Council established and piloted a *Framework for Graduate Programs*. Developed to guide the identification of discipline-specific, program learning outcomes and related assessment mechanisms, the *Framework* articulates an appropriately general, yet comprehensive, description of graduate preparation and related outcomes. Key areas for student development include core disciplinary knowledge, research methods and analysis, pedagogy, scholarly communication, professionalism, research ethics, and independent research. During the academic year, five programs piloted the *Framework*, generating program learning outcomes and related assessment plans. The team was impressed with the inclusive, collaborative, and flexible nature of the pilot process as well as the resulting materials. The team also notes as a best practice the inclusion of graduate students, selected specifically for their pedagogical expertise, in the pilot process; their involvement was reported to have enriched the process in significant ways. Looking forward, the five pilot programs are expected to implement their assessment plans this academic year, collecting initial assessment data for two to three outcomes. From there, these programs will begin to develop strategies for implementation of improvements based on the results of these assessments. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.4)

Building from this positive experience, TFU plans to involve its remaining graduate

programs (approximately 40) in the same process, with the goal of having all graduate programs engaged in student learning outcomes assessment by 2015-2016. This will be accomplished by dividing the remaining programs into two groups, each of which will proceed through a three stage process –Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), assessment plans, and implementation – with one stage per year. The first cohort will begin this academic year, and the second, the next. The pilot groups will assist these programs through the process, with administrative staff support provided by Graduate Division and the Division of Undergraduate Education. Graduate programs are also able to seek support in the form of Assessment Grants provided by the Division of Undergraduate Education. (CFRs 2.4, 3.4, 4.7)

TFU has also committed to integrating the assessment of student outcomes into the formal program review process, both to address the overarching goals of strengthening the excellence of its graduate programs as well as to sustain program engagement with this work going forward.

The team encourages TFU to pursue its plans to advance assessment in graduate education. The team also encourages TFU to continue to involve graduate students in this work as appropriate and feasible, noting the benefits of collaboration that accrue to both the programs and the students as professionals in training. (CFR 2.7, 4.4, 4.8)

#### *Conclusion: Student Learning in the Major*

With respect to TFU's learning outcome assessment efforts at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the team was struck by the deep commitment of faculty and administrative leadership to the continued development of the institution's culture of assessment and the collaborative spirit with which this work is being accomplished. Underpinning this commitment is the recognition, by faculty and administrative leadership alike, that findings from learning

outcomes assessment will fill a gap in the institution's understanding of student learning and success. Of particular note is the faculty's clear ownership of assessment, signaled in part by its integration into the faculty governance system. Also significant is the degree of administrative collaboration enacted in support of academic assessment, with staff of the Graduate Division, the Division of Undergraduate Education, and the Provost's Office beginning to form a distributed but coordinated network of reasonable size in support of the faculty's work. (CFR 2.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8)

Given the extent of TFU's assessment efforts, which include General Education in addition to the assessment activities described in this section, it will be important that TFU continue existing staff support while monitoring ongoing staffing needs. Adequate staffing will be particularly crucial if future financial circumstances necessitate further cuts to educational programs (which thus far have been restricted in size and impact), as assessment will help academic units and the institution better understand and manage the impacts of such decisions on academic excellence. (CFR 2.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8)

## **B. Theme 2: Educational Effectiveness in General Education**

TFU's General Education program is overseen by the faculty Academic Senate Council on Educational Policy (CEP). With revisions to General Education (GE) complete, the CEP saw the ACOSCU reaffirmation process as an opportunity to establish specific learning outcomes for all eight GE categories and to develop processes for the systematic and ongoing assessment of student learning in GE. The eight categories are: writing, science and technology, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, a language other than English, multicultural studies, international and global issues, and quantitative, symbolic and computational reasoning.

TFU has done much admirable work in this area. Key advancements include the revision and refinement of the institution's General Education categories and the identification

of specific student learning outcomes for each category. Course level outcomes have been developed for categories in which students must take more than one course, with category level outcomes serving as course-level outcomes for the remainder. The Assessment Committee has also assumed responsibility for GE assessment. Assessment methods have been developed and implemented for the requirements in Category I: Writing, with an aggressive plan and timetable outlined for the initiation of assessment in the remaining seven categories. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.7)

As part of the implementation of the newly formulated GE learning outcomes, the CEP initiated a re-evaluation of all courses that were grandfathered into the new GE program. Alignment was promoted by stipulating that the GE status of a course would be revoked if it did not satisfy, or was not revised to satisfy, the learning outcomes of the category in which it was located. The Assessment Committee began this process by informing instructors of the learning outcomes associated with GE courses in their units. The Policy Subcommittee of the CEP then began reviewing syllabi against the learning outcomes to ensure that grandfathered courses were designed to satisfy these new learning expectations. If courses and outcomes were not aligned, the subcommittee worked with a unit to redesign the course appropriately. If the unit wished, it could withdraw the GE status of the course, which happened in some cases. (CRFs 2.3, 2.4, 3.1)

In the course of this work, the CEP realized that many faculty, students, and undergraduate advisors were unaware of the outcomes newly associated with the revised GE. In light of this finding, the CEP decided to transparently revise its plan to initiate the assessment of the remaining GE categories, recognizing that it would be inappropriate to assess the impact of a program on student learning before it was fully implemented. The CEP has since embarked on an informational and educational campaign to raise awareness of the new outcomes among key stakeholders; it is well underway to completion. Efforts include outreach to all GE instructors,



the integration of relevant GE outcomes into syllabi, increasing academic advisors' awareness of outcomes, encouraging attention to outcomes during student counseling about course selection, and other strategies. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4)

The institution has also revised its course proposal system to require that new GE courses, or revisions to existing courses, include the learning outcomes associated with the course. All grandfathered GE courses that have yet to undergo review, and any new GE course proposals must, therefore, state the GE outcomes the course is intended to develop. In addition, all GE courses must be accompanied by a statement describing how the course satisfies the outcomes listed. This mechanism assures that GE courses up for re-approval and all future GE course proposals will specifically address the outcomes listed. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.5)

If the resources are available, TFU may consider increasing the rate of the review of grandfathered courses, which could significantly reduce the time to completing this first step while still accomplishing the goal of educating the campus. It might also consider evaluating the degree to which the assessment of a particular GE category may place unexpected burdens on units offering a larger number of courses in support of that outcome or that increase the time needed to address a particular category. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5)

In terms of progress with the assessment of GE outcomes, the team particularly acknowledges the writing program's model assessment efforts, which have resulted in positive changes to writing instruction across the campus. Most importantly, follow-up assessments have revealed these efforts have improved student learning gains. (CFRs 2.4, 2.5, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

### *Conclusion: Educational Effectiveness in General Education*

TFU has made commendable progress in advancing its goals for GE. In particular, the team commends TFU for devising an effective strategy and timeline for ensuring that GE

courses incorporate the new GE student learning outcomes prior to initiating institution level assessment of these objectives. The team encourages TFU to pursue this path, with full implementation of the GE curriculum preceding efforts to assess its impact on student learning. Notably, TFU's revisions to the roll-out of its GE assessment activities were grounded in solid evidence of campus need. As such, these adjustments strengthened the foundation for success moving forward. The team confirmed this approach to be representative of all TFU's efforts undertaken as part of the reaffirmation process: the commitment to do it right from the start. (CFRs 2.4, 3.2, 3.8)

### **C. Theme 3: Academic Program Review**

TFU has a strong system of academic program review (APR) in effect. The formal APR process is organized by school, with each school and its departments reviewed on a 10 year cycle in a process that is overseen by the Academic Program Review Board (APRB), a committee of the Academic Senate. As per policy, APR follows a clearly defined process with a specific schedule and required outcomes. There is wide engagement by faculty, departmental and school leadership, leading to a visit by external reviewers and a resulting report that is widely distributed through the faculty and administration. Comments on that report are returned, responses to those comments are mandated, and, in appropriate cases, follow-up reports are required and assessed. Concrete actions are not required for all reviews, but when specific actions are required they are tracked by the APRB. This process can and has resulted in significant changes, including one example of disestablishing a program. (CFRs 1.2, 1.3, 2.7, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

As discussed in the TFU's EER Report, academic assessment, particularly of learning objectives and outcomes, continues to be integrated into the APR process. It is now an explicit

part of each APRB charge to the external review committee, with specific questions asked regarding undergraduate educational outcomes. A parallel effort is anticipated at the graduate level. Efforts are also underway to improve institutional support for this integration and to share best practices across the departments that are about to start the process. Some schools have experience in this area through, for example, ABET accreditation, and generally view learning outcomes and assessment positively. One school has largely completed an APR in this new form, and another is now starting its APR. Best practices are still being developed. For example, program learning outcomes are only beginning to be used for this purpose, although the next set of programs up for review have already started to plan their use. The team believes the commitment is there and expects TFU to make significant progress with each successive review. (CFRs 1.2, 2.4, 2.7, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

The Academic Senate has also put into place a program for evaluating the APR process itself. The APRB has developed and administered formal surveys for both internal and external participants in the APR process. This has appropriate institutional support, and is receiving good attention from the leadership in the administration and Faculty Senate. The first round of surveys from the review of the School of Social Sciences was analyzed to produce a set of specific recommendations for improvement. These recommendations received wide attention, were approved by both the Senate's CEP and Graduate Council, and were implemented for the School of Social Ecology APR. The formal survey after that review has now been examined, and follow-up is in progress. To date, the surveys have focused on the APR process itself, examining engagement, logistics, clarity of purpose, comprehensiveness and similar measures. As confirmed during the visit, future iterations would benefit from increased focus on review quality, including topics such as whether learning outcomes are being appropriately addressed. (CFRs 1.2, 1.3, 2.7, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

Beyond the periodic APR process, the campus recently engaged in a review and ranking of academic programs (the “Campus-wide Assessment”). The purpose was to transparently align resource allocation with the campus’ goal of continued program excellence in the context of addressing budget cuts to TFU. This process involved representatives from Academic Senate committees, deans, and the administration in a systematic, evidence-based review of all schools and departments. Resources, primarily faculty FTE, were then distributed in light of rankings, with programs ranked most highly receiving additional resources to maintain or increase quality. Although not directly coupled to the APR process due to differences in timing and scope, this did demonstrate use of APR review results by the institution in its planning and budget process. Looking forward, it is important that initiatives like this continue to be coupled to APR outcomes to strengthen the institution’s academic review process. (CFRs 1.2, 1.3, 2.4, 2.7, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

*Conclusion: Academic Program Review*

In its Capacity and Preparatory Self-Study, TFU set two goals for further development of program review by the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review: "implement the revised academic program review process and conduct a self-study to assess the effect of the revisions" and "map the extent to which Academic Program Reviews are incorporated into the decision-making process of the university at all levels." The Commission action letter of July, 2011 echoed the first of these goals, encouraging development of “a formal mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the program review process itself.” The Commission also requested further work in the area of “effectively incorporating results of assessment of student learning into program reviews.” In assessing TFU’s advancement in these areas, the team had access to example program review reports, policies, and survey instruments and related findings. The team

also discussed the program review process with the APRB, administrative leadership, and faculty from recently reviewed programs.

The first of these goals – a formal process for assessing the efficacy of the APR process - has been substantially met. TFU has also made a substantial commitment to integrating assessment of student learning into the APR process, consistent with the Commission’s expectation. The team encourages TFU to continue to pursue its efforts to iteratively improve its APR process, including the integration of student learning assessment as means for continuous improvement in program excellence. Regarding the goal of mapping the use of APR findings in planning and decision making at all levels of the university, the campus has made clear progress at the program and school level, with some analysis remaining at higher levels of university planning.

Overall, TFU has in place a strong and effective system of academic program review that is faculty driven through the Academic Senate and that has resulted in significant improvements in teaching and learning. Of special note is TFU’s ongoing meta-evaluation of the academic program review process, which enables continuous improvement of this core component of the institution’s quality assurance system. (CFRs 1.2, 1.3, 2.7, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

#### **D. Student Success: Further Development of Efforts**

For the Educational Effectiveness Review, TFU focused its analysis of student success on two significant TFU student populations: first-generation undergraduates - an increasingly large fraction of both new freshmen and transfer student cohorts - and graduate students, whose education is core to the mission of TFU and the UC system as whole. TFU’s focus on these two priority populations follows recommendations stemming from the Capacity and Preparatory Review. This focus also extends, in ways that add value to the institution, the campus’ ongoing

and high quality work tracking key indicators of student success, disaggregating student data by appropriate demographic categories, benchmarking against appropriate peer institutions, and making data available to the campus community and the public - activities warranting commendation by the CPR team. The following sections provide the EER team's findings regarding TFU's examination of the success of first year, first-generation undergraduate students and, separately, its graduate students. (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 4.5)

#### *Undergraduate: First-Generation Student Success*

All incoming freshmen at TFU may choose to participate in a Summer Bridge or a Summer Start program. The subset of first-generation, low-income students may choose to participate in the Freshman Summer Bridge Program. Freshmen who are not eligible for the Summer Bridge Program may choose to participate in the Freshman Summer Start Program. Both summer programs include similar academic course components (two courses, one GE), as well as workshops and activities offered by faculty and staff to support cohort-building, acclimation to university expectations, and the development of essential college-level skills. The Freshman Summer Bridge Program is free. This is a crTFUal benefit to low-income students as it allows them to take two courses at no cost. (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 2.11)

The goal of TFU's study was to assess the impact of the Freshman Summer Bridge Program on the academic success of first-generation students during their freshman year, a key first step toward successful completion of an undergraduate degree. In review of this work, the team had access to TFU's EER Report, as well as admissions, retention, and graduation rates by ethnicity and gender. During the visit, the team also conducted detailed interviews with administrative leadership and staff with responsibility for student success. (CFR 1.9)

To begin to assess the impact of the Freshman Summer Bridge Program on first-generation student success, TFU compared the success of students in the Summer Bridge program to two cohorts: Freshman Summer Start Program students from the same summer, and a random sample of first quarter freshmen who chose *not* to enroll in any summer program. The latter cohort was included in this initial phase of TFU's analysis of first-student success because relevant information was available in an existing and accessible data set. For all three cohorts, data describing pre-college demographics, high school academic performance, and first year academic performance (cumulative GPA and total number of units passed) were evaluated. (CFRs 1.5, 2.10, 2.11, 4.5)

After accounting for differences in entering student characteristics among these three groups, TFU found that the Freshman Summer Bridge cohort had a statistically significant higher GPA than both comparison cohorts. Thus, the preliminary conclusion is that the Freshman Summer Bridge program has a significant positive impact on the academic success of first-generation students as reflected in first year, cumulative GPA. The next step is to further refine the project; the success of all students eligible for the Freshman Summer Bridge Program will be tracked and metrics of success for those who participate in the program will be compared with those who do not. This will provide a clearer analysis of relative success as it relates to participation in Summer Bridge. The Office of Student Support Services also intends to do the same with Freshman Summer Start participants and their peers. Finally, TFU intends to systematically gather retention and graduation rates for first-generation students. Resulting data and findings will be summarized and publicly disseminated to support awareness of and response to the needs of this growing population of students. (CFR 1.5, 2.10, 2.11, 4.5, 4.6)

In discussing this work with the institution, it became apparent that the evolving collaborative relationship between Institutional Research and the Assessment, Research and

Evaluation Group within the Division of Undergraduate Education had been essential to the success of this project. In light of this, as well as TFU's commitment to ongoing student success research, the team encourages TFU to continue to support the administrative data analysis resources dedicated to these and TFU's assessment efforts more broadly.

Pending continuing resource and collaborative trends, the team also suggests that TFU consider extending this work to address the success of other student populations. Populations that might be considered include commuter and residential students, as well as ethnic minority groups such as the growing Hispanic/Latino student population. Finally, the team encourages TFU to increase the impact of these efforts by engaging academic advisors in this work, including in the consideration of how findings could inform advising practices. The team was impressed that the Division of Undergraduate Education is implementing a new, confidential designation on student records to "flag" students who are classified as first-generation, low-income, thus beginning the systematic dissemination of significant demographic indicators to the advising staff. (CFRs 1.5, 2.3, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 3.1, 4.5, 4.6)

### *Graduate Student Success*

At the graduate level, TFU addressed student success via a review of the assessment efforts it has undertaken to strengthen its graduate programs as a whole. In its review of TFU's work in this area, the team met with faculty, Academic Senate members, graduate administrative leadership, and graduate students. It also had access to graduation and time-to-degree statistics, campus survey results and related reports, evaluations of graduate student support programs, and related policies. (CFR 1.9)

To advance its goals for graduate success, TFU has undertaken a number of important research studies and related initiatives over the last several years. Under the



direction of the Graduate Dean and in collaboration with graduate programs, for example, TFU has been collecting and evaluating extensive data on time-to-degree, degree completion, and student progress on program-by-program basis. Findings from this work have been used to revise the graduate fellowship funding formula, which now weights degree completion more heavily relative to enrollments. The campus has also engaged in efforts to determine and enforce a “maximum time” for graduate student degree completion. This initiative was undertaken in cooperation with each academic unit, which submitted reports on time-to-degree based on national norms. In this way, the process accommodated discipline specific differences in time- to-degree and facilitated ownership of the initiative by degree granting units. (CFRs 2.10, 4.4, 4.5)

To support timely progress in light of the maximum time criterion, TFU has implemented a system of support and accountability within academic units. Central to this has been the effort to ensure that students receive appropriate mentoring for degree progress. In response to graduate student survey data, the Graduate Division, with the help of a Graduate Council committee on mentoring and program structure (which included representation from graduate student government), developed materials and workshops on mentoring and advising. In 2011- 2012, the Graduate Division hosted mandatory faculty workshops on how to mentor, give feedback, and address students struggling to advance. These sessions also alerted faculty to the various services offered by the Graduate Resource Center. The Graduate Division also hired a full time academic counselor, who is qualified to assist students and faculty, as well as to make mental health referrals. (CFRs 2.4, 2.10, 2.13, 3.4, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6)

On the accountability side, the Graduate Division developed the *Individual Development Plan*, a document intended to help both students and faculty structure, make transparent, and monitor student progress. The *Plan* is given to all students at newly-instituted campus-wide

Graduate Student Orientations (including a separate orientation for international students), along with resource information. Each department is also now required to discuss every student's progress during a faculty meeting once annually. Other steps in support of student progress and accountability include dissertation fellowships awarded by the Graduate Division to all-but-dissertation students; units nominate students and if the student does not complete the dissertation in the fellowship year, the unit must pay for the cost of the fellowship. Thus, the system is designed both to ensure due process when enforcing maximum time limits and, most importantly, to support regular attention to student progress and to ensure timely intervention as needed. The team notes the importance of this effort, given national concerns about graduate-level time-to-degree and career progress. (CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.12, 2.13, 4.5)

Graduate Division also conducts a number of surveys to better understand the academic and personal needs of graduate and professional students, often in partnership with the Associated Graduate Students and the Academic Senate. Findings have been used to extend the array of services provided by the Graduate Resource Center in support of academic and professional success; examples include writing tutorials, speaker series, and workshops that address professional development, grant-writing, career guidance, time management, wellness, and work-life balance. Again, the team notes the importance of this work and recognizes TFU for its progressive work in this area. (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 3.1, 3.4, 4.6)

Graduate students met during the visit expressed their appreciation for all of these efforts, noting the importance of distinguishing the needs of graduate from undergraduate students in promoting student success. They did, however, express concern that a similar distinction between undergraduate and graduate student needs was not always equally well addressed by areas of the campus external to the Graduate Division. In particular, issues such as affordable housing, parking, and the availability of longer term mental health care, were noted to negatively

impact student academic success, stress levels, morale, and engagement. The team encourages the campus to examine these concerns in so far as it affects the ability of students to manage their campus-related life in support of expeditious degree completion. The team also encourages the campus to consider investigating the strength of its communication channels with graduate students. Even when substantive changes may not be possible, there was some indication that students would benefit from greater transparency regarding issues impacting their degree pursuits. (CFRs 2.10, 2.11, 4.6, 4.8)

TFU's steps to support and promote graduate student success from an institutional level are significant, particularly given the high cost of graduate education to the university. The team applauds TFU for its proactive approach, especially its mentoring initiatives, fiscal support, career counseling, and early intervention mechanisms, which include a mental health referral system. As students report facing a contraction of work opportunities to offset financial pressures, and increasing stress levels, it will be important to continue to monitor and respond to needs in light of TFU's completion goals.

#### *Conclusion: Student Success*

Overall, the team was impressed with the commitment of the faculty and administrative leadership to pursuing an evidence-based approach to advancing both undergraduate and graduate student success. The team commends the institution for this work in support of an enduring culture of productive assessment. Looking forward, the team encourages the institution to continue to resource these activities, as their value to advancing the institution's strategic goal of strengthening the excellence of both its undergraduate and graduate programs is abundantly clear. (CFR 4.2)

## **E. TFU's Systems for Enhancing Educational Effectiveness and Student Learning**

As a top tier research university and member of the TFU system, TFU began this reaffirmation process with long-established, quality assurance systems in place and, commensurately, with a distinguished history of educational effectiveness and excellence. Relevant systems include robust, Academic Senate-owned processes for the review of new courses, substantively revised courses, and new academic programs, as well as for the periodic review of extant programs through a comprehensive academic program review process. The faculty personnel review process has also long ensured regularly scheduled assessments of individual faculty member contributions to research, teaching and service. It is through these processes that the faculty executes collective responsibility for establishing, reviewing, fostering, and demonstrating their expectations for student learning and achievement. (CFRs 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 3.11, 2.7, 4.4)

TFU also began the affirmation process with similarly extensive and robust institutional-level planning and decision-making processes and structures. Administrative and academic decision-making is evidence-based, supported by extensive arrays of data collected and reported annually, for example, as part of the accountability measures instituted by the UC Office of the President, but also through academic processes like program review. It is through these structures that the campus has been able to respond to the recent budget cuts transparently, collaboratively, and effectively in support of the continued excellence of its academic programs. (CFRs 1.3, 3.5, 3.8, 4.2, 4.5)

The reaffirmation process did, however, provide TFU with an opportunity to enhance these systems by developing and implementing practices for the assessment of student learning at both undergraduate and graduate levels. TFU's progress in these areas was evident throughout the team's visit. Campus knowledge and support for a culture of evidence-based

inquiry is apparent in faculty leadership, professional staff, and perhaps most importantly upper-level administration. The Academic Senate has assumed responsibility for assessment, and the structure of Senate appointments will help to ensure ongoing development of this new component of curriculum oversight even as faculty leadership changes. Assessment efforts in the academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as in the area of student life, have been carefully designed to ensure that the university continues to make progress in the years between accreditations. At the undergraduate level, this has involved the creation of an infrastructure that is centralized, faculty governed, and integrated into already existing institutional processes. A parallel structure is well on its way at the graduate level, with substantial commitment from faculty and administrative leadership. (CFRs 2.4, 3.11, 4.6, 4.7)

Implementation of assessment has also been strategic and flexible, and allowed for faculty buy-in. The Academic Senate's Assessment Committee deliberately chose a multi-year cycle for evaluation of student learning in undergraduate programs to ensure that assessment is manageable and will endure. Specifically, all undergraduate programs have been scheduled assessment reporting at five year intervals within the 10 year cycle of program review. The results of assessment findings are reviewed by individual departments and reported to the Academic Senate's Assessment Committee. Results have led to curricular improvements and, in some cases, have promoted more specific courses of inquiry on various issues within the departments and campus wide topics. (CFRs 2.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

Steps have also been taken to support ongoing institutionalization. The approval processes for new courses and programs have been amended to require learning outcomes and assessment plans, respectively. The Assessment Committee has implemented a formal, guideline-based process for reviewing and providing feedback to programs on their assessment reports. The undergraduate program review process now includes explicit attention to student

learning outcomes, and continued development will be supported by the institution's formal process for reviewing and improving the efficacy of program review. In this way, TFU will continue to steward the integration of student learning outcomes into program review, a seminal academic practice that is seriously engaged by faculty and the results of which inform planning and decision-making processes at all levels of the institution. (CFRs 2.7, 4.4)

Finally, outside of the 10 year program review cycle, the Academic Senate and administration have agreed on a means of accountability for program assessment that is linked to resource allocation. While the content of assessment reports are considered confidential findings that reside in the Academic Senate, the Senate will report to the Academic Planning Group and other relevant administrative units about whether campus units are in compliance with Senate policies and regulations regarding assessment activities. Lack of compliance can, at the discretion of the administration, be used in administrative decisions, such as budget allocations. Thus, regular program engagement in assessment is incentivized both through Senate and administrative avenues. (CFR 3.8)

A similar evolution is underway at the graduate level under the leadership of the Graduate Council and the Graduate Dean. Although in earlier stages of deployment, processes at this level are anticipated to closely parallel those for undergraduate programs. A clear, milestone-based plan has been established that will have all graduate programs engaged in the assessment of student learning by 2015-2016. Significant to the success of this work is the faculty and administration's shared view that assessment of student learning outcomes is crucial to the institution's larger goal of strengthening the excellence of its graduate programs.

Work on the General Education program continues to advance toward the goal of a GE curriculum that is aligned with the now established categorical and course-level GE outcomes.

An aggressive, timeline-based plan for completing this alignment work and implementing the assessment of the GE program has been developed. The expectation is that each of the eight GE categories will be assessed by the Assessment Committee on a five year cycle. In relation to this roll out, the visiting team recommends that the curriculum be fully implemented before impact assessment takes place in order to ensure that the time and energy spent on assessment yields findings that can be confidently used in curriculum planning. (CFRs 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6)

Student Affairs has just recently developed division level outcomes and intends to work on aligning unit functions with these goals. In order to create a process that is more transparent, the division will publish these goals on unit websites. The division also plans to establish a cycle for periodic review of its units' effectiveness. (CFRs 1.2, 1.7, 2.11, 4.6)

The university is also committed to providing assessment support in the form of funding and staffing. This commitment is considered part of the institution's larger commitment to continued investment in educational excellence. Assessment grants provide incentives for faculty to devote focused time to developing outcomes and assessment methodologies. The Assessment, Research and Evaluation Group (AREG) supports faculty work on outcomes and assessment within their units, coordinates the collection of assessment data, provides administrative support to the Assessment Committee, develops workshops, and administers funding as part of the Assessment Grant Program. (CFRs 3.1, 3.4)

While to date assessment has focused mainly on undergraduate programs and departments, the AREG will soon need to expand its capacity to address assessment needs of the graduate programs, General Education, and Student Affairs. The AREG has already begun to identify additional staffing needs on campus to support processing and analysis of assessment data. This will involve administrative collaboration among the Office of Institutional Research, the Graduate Division, the Division of Undergraduate Education, and the Provost's Office. The

team encourages TFU to pursue these efforts, and to monitor the effectiveness of this structure in relation to institutional goals for gathering and using assessment data.

*Conclusion: Systems for Enhancing Educational Effectiveness*

TFU has put in place processes, practices, and plans that, with continued attention, will firmly institutionalize over the coming years a quality assurance system that has been enhanced by the integration of methods for assessing student learning. The team is impressed with TFU's progress since the Capacity and Preparatory Review and, based on TFU's record of success thus far, is confident that TFU's assessment and related quality assurance practices will continue to develop and mature under the joint stewardship of a committed faculty and administration.

**F. Additional Emphases**

*a. Impact of Recession on Finances*

The TFU Irvine, as part of the TFU system, has experienced significant losses in state support. In comparison to other states, California's budget reductions are among the largest. This has required TFU to make difficult funding decisions that inhibit its ability to provide the highest quality education programs.

It appears that the university is coping well with these cutbacks and the administration deserves recognition for its adaption to these conditions. Significant to these efforts has been a shared governance structure established with the goal of promoting transparency and collaboration in budget planning. The institution is committed, regardless of fiscal constraints, to maintain its focus on academic excellence. Consistent with this goal it has acted to minimize the impacts of funding cuts on its educational mission. (CFRs 3.5, 3.8)

The UC system is developing two new approaches to funding that will have positive



impacts on TFU. The “funding streams” and “rebenching” initiatives, which will reallocate central system costs and equalize per student funding among campuses respectively within the system, should be implemented and will be a positive step for TFU.

It is also clear that the state needs to reinvest in higher education, establishing predictable funding that minimizes uncertainty and enables long term planning going forward. Like other states, California should identify new revenues to support higher education.

*b. Transparency and Accuracy in Recruitment and Marketing*

TFU maintains a comprehensive set of websites and related brochures providing clear and accurate information describing admissions criteria, degree costs, financial resources, etc. for its undergraduate (freshmen, transfer) and graduate degree programs (academic and professional).

Current and detailed student data, including retention and graduation rates and time-to-degree statistics, are provided on The Office of Institutional Research website and through publications like the TFUCollege Portrait. Time-to-degree data for academic graduate degrees are publicly available on the Graduate Division website. Information describing the kinds of employment and career opportunities open to graduates is provided on individual program websites. Data summarizing post-graduate student employment for bachelor’s degree recipients is available in the College Portrait and the Career Center provides examples of job titles held by graduates of each of TFU’s schools. Information on graduate student placement is available on many program websites. This information and more can be reached through links originating in the campus’ Prospective Student website, a comprehensive portal. That this information accurately portrays the institution was confirmed during the visit by students who reported program information to be consistent with their experiences. (CFR1.7, 2.12)

*c. Review of the Juris Doctor Program*

The Regents of the TFU established the TFU Law School in 2006 following an analysis of the relative shortage of opportunities for public legal education in southern California and in fulfillment of the original plans for the campus. In February 2009, the Structural Change Panel of ACOSCU granted final approval of the Juris Doctoral (JD) program, signaling a special focus on the JD program during TFU's fall 2012 Educational Effectiveness Review. In the meantime, the American Bar Association (ABA), the accrediting agency for law schools, conducted a full site visit in 2010, granted provisional approval on June 10, 2011, and conducted a limited site visit in November 2011. Full ABA accreditation is anticipated in June 2014.

In support of this review, the Law School provided extensive materials to the visiting team, including an April 3, 2012 report highlighting changes since the 2009 approval, its 2010 Self Study for the ABA, reports and recommendations from the ABA accreditation process, course evaluations, and grade distributions. Team members also met with the Law School Dean, members of the administration and faculty, and students. (CRF1.9)

The mission of the TFU Law School is to train lawyers for practice at the highest levels of the profession. The founding law faculty spent a full year before students' arrival designing an innovative curriculum that stresses hands-on learning, interdisciplinary study, and public service. Curricular requirements and offerings at every level—including required clinics, mentoring programs, and a capstone course—embody an explicit commitment to skills training and development of a professional identity. (CFRs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1)

Five program learning outcomes outline the critical knowledge and skills expected of the school's graduates; data provided by the school indicate that most course offerings address more than half of these outcomes. The school also encourages faculty to include student learning

outcomes in course syllabi. Faculty surveys report widespread use of multiple methods of formative and summative assessment in courses, augmenting law schools' traditional reliance on high stakes exams graded on a curve. Innovative and engaged pedagogy is strongly valued as a hiring criterion, and faculty meeting and workshop time devoted to curriculum and pedagogy underscores attention to teaching as a community value. The school has also begun to use teaching assistants to support student learning. This development is valued by students and the school may want to consider increasing its use of student teaching assistants as a means to help scale the school's commitment to student learning as enrollment increases. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 3.3, 4.6, 4.7)

The team encourages the faculty to maintain its extraordinary commitment to regular review and reexamination of their curriculum and pedagogy, particularly as the school continues to grow. The team also encourages the school to build upon its strong foundation in course-level assessment to more broadly assess the cumulative impact of the curriculum on student learning. Assessing student outcomes from a degree-level, programmatic perspective is essential to address the challenge articulated by one faculty member: "How to weave a tapestry out of the threads of what we do individually." It will also yield insights relevant to development of the co-curriculum as well as broader program planning. The campus' well-developed institutional research and assessment structures for graduate programs offer excellent resources for further development of processes for assessment and tracking.

Indirect measures confirm student exposure to opportunities related to many of the program outcomes. The 2012 Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE) revealed that TFUlaw students reported experiences with volunteer or pro bono work (96%), writing multiple papers (59%), and collaboration outside of class on assignments (70%), at rates well above selected peer institutions and two to three times LSSSE 2012 averages. Students are also

encouraged to focus on objectives beyond grades. Class ranks are not publicized, but instead recognition for “best community builder,” “best leader,” or for engagement with pro bono work reinforces the broader learning objectives of the educational program. Students reported that the pro bono work significantly helped their development of professional skills and values, and they appreciated these and other opportunities to prepare for entry into the legal profession. (CFRs 2.3, 2.6, 2.10, 4.6)

Students also reported valuing the informal community building that has flourished in these early years, and advised the school to find ways to preserve the close community as enrollments increase. A student-centered model of support services has closely attended to the needs of the student body. Students report close relationships with faculty, administration, and career counselors. Two full-time professionals provide academic support from the first year through preparation for the Bar Examination. Over three-fourths of students across all levels characterized their entire educational experience as “excellent,” the highest possible rating and well over twice the rate of peer, public, and all schools sampled by LSSSE in 2012. Future surveys of TFUlaw students should yield extensive, longitudinal data about topics ranging from financial resources to workplace discrimination. Faculty also expressed interest and creativity in considering new measures of student learning, such as a post-summer job survey of students’ self-assessed levels of skills preparation. The team encourages the Law School to incorporate into future planning the assessment of both curricular and co-curricular programs. (CFRs 2.3, 2.10, 2.11, 4.6, 4.8).

Only one class has graduated from the Law School: 58 of the 60 entering students graduated in 2012, one is pursuing a joint degree, and one left the study of law; none have transferred. Results for the July 2012 California Bar Examination are not yet available. Nonetheless, and despite the depressed legal market, 82% of 2012 graduates report employment

in “JD preferred” positions, including 18 in prestigious judicial clerkships. Continuing students have also had excellent rates of employment in law-related summer jobs. (CFRs 2.6, 4.5)

Since 2008-2009 the faculty has grown from 10 founding members to 34, with plans for regular annual growth to about 55 total faculty members. The school provides mentors and allows regular sabbaticals after each six semesters of teaching. The diverse faculty is comprised of recognized scholars. “Leiter Scores” estimating the scholarly impact of law faculties place the Law School at #7 nationally. The entering class of 2009 cited the reputations of the dean and of the faculty ahead of their full tuition waivers as their reasons for matriculating to TFU. (CFRs 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

A foundational goal of the Law School is to achieve “Top 20” status. To attract top faculty and students, the school has engaged in careful faculty recruitment and pursued a strategic combination of scholarships and admissions policies for students. From an entering class of 60 students in fall 2009, total enrollment has grown to almost 300 in fall 2012, while student quality has been maintained. The school’s strategic plan calls for it to become self-sustaining by 2016 based on professional degree fee revenue from a maximum of 600 students and private fundraising, which began with the school’s inception. Planned increases in enrollment may be adjusted to maintain LSAT/GPA levels, and parallel growth of the faculty will ensure the student faculty ratio does not exceed 12:1. To accommodate this growth, long term plans for a new building are underway. The ABA accreditation process emphasizes additional capacity details.

Until financial independence, support from the university is critical, and budget needs continue to increase with growth. TFU leadership has been committed to supporting the Law School, including through recent state and campus budget cuts. In FY 2011, the university provided over \$11 million in operating budget, faculty and staff compensation, and library

acquisitions (offset by over \$2.2 million in student fee revenue). Continuing commitments will be necessary for the school to realize its goals, and the team encourages ongoing support. (CFRs 1.1, 1.5, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8)

The team was impressed with the Law School, in particular its commitment to teaching innovation and the establishment of a strong community that supports the holistic development of a professional attorney. Students encouraged the school to institutionalize its initial flexibility and experimental orientation and to “retain the spirit of entrepreneurship.” This founding approach poses a powerful opportunity for meaningful legal training, assessment, and continuous self-improvement.

### **III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CAPACITY AND PREPARATORY REVIEW AND THE EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW**

The TFU is an educationally effective institution by any indicator of quality. Its consistently strong retention and graduation rates correctly signal a campus-wide commitment to student learning and success. This commitment was manifest in the quality of its self-examination in support of its Educational Effectiveness Review, and in the teams’ discussions with faculty, staff, administrators, and students representing all levels and divisions of the institution.

In its Institutional Proposal, TFU established clear set of overarching goals for the reaffirmation of its accreditation. Through a collaborative effort involving faculty, students, staff, and administrative leadership, TFU has achieved its goals to a substantial degree. Further, TFU has established clear trajectories for continued institutionalization of the practices and processes developed and implemented over the last several years. The team was impressed by these achievements and recognizes the significant leadership, time, and resources

needed to effect these developments at such a large and diverse institution and in a time of economic uncertainty.

In light of its significant advances, the team commends the institution for

- 1) Its commitment to establishing a culture of assessment, undergraduate and graduate, that is supported and governed by the faculty. (CFRs 2.4, 2.8, 3.2, 3.11, 4.6, 4.7)
- 2) The progress made toward the implementation of its new GE curriculum, including the revision of the GE categories, a thoughtful plan for aligning outcomes and courses, and the development of an assessment protocol. (CFRs 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.7)
- 3) Its strong academic program review process, including its integration of student learning and self-evaluation. (CFR 2.7, 3.2, 3.11, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7)
- 4) Its support for the collaboration between the Office of Institutional Research and the Assessment, Research, and Evaluation Group to capture and share data for institutional and assessment-based planning and decision making. (CFRs 2.10, 3.1, 4.3, 4.5)

The team also reviewed TFU's Juris Doctoral program in keeping with expectations stated in the ACOSCU Structural Change Review of the Law School in 2009 and the ACOSCU Commission Action Letter of July 18, 2011. The team was impressed with school's progress since its first intake of students in 2009, in particular,

- 5) The team commends the Law School's commitment to teaching innovation and the establishment of a strong community that supports the holistic development of a professional attorney. (CFRs 2.4, 2.8, 2.9, 2.13, 3.1, 3.2, 3.11, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7)

As documented throughout this report, TFU has made substantial advances in relation to its goals for institutional improvement and continued educational excellence. In support of continued momentum and advancement of the goals initiated through this reaffirmation process, the team recommends that the institution:

- 1) Follow through on its plans to complete the implementation of the GE program and then proceed to implement plans to assess the impact of the GE program. (CFRs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)
- 2) Continue to provide adequate staffing in the areas of undergraduate, graduate, and GE assessment, and in institutional research. (CFRs 3.1, 3.4, 3.8, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7)



#### IV. APPENDICES

##### Appendix A: Credit Hour Policies and Procedures

Team Report Appendix  
CREDIT HOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Institution: TFU  
Kind of Visit: EER  
Date: Oct 11, 2012

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all CPR, EER and Initial Accreditation Visits. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report.

<b>Material Reviewed</b>	<b>Questions/Comments</b> (Please enter findings and recommendations in the comment section of this column as appropriate.)	<b>Verified Yes/No</b>
Policy on credit hour	Does this policy adhere to ACOSCU policy and federal regulations?	Yes
	Comments: Policy on located on Academic Senate website.	
Process(es)/ periodic review	Does the institution have a procedure for periodic review of credit hour assignments to ensure that they are accurate and reliable (for example, through program review, new course approval process, periodic audits)?	Yes
	Does the institution adhere to this procedure?	Yes
	Comments: Process is administered through standing Academic Senate committee, which reviews periodically both through campus-wide evaluations (e.g. current Gen-Ed re-evaluation) and the periodic program review process.	
Schedule of on-ground courses showing when they meet	Does this schedule show that on-ground courses meet for the prescribed number of hours?	Yes
	Comments: Spot check found no inconsistencies	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for online and hybrid courses	What kind of courses (online or hybrid or both)? Both How many syllabi were reviewed? 6 What degree level(s)? Undergraduate What discipline(s)? Computer Science, Informatix	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	Yes
	Comments: None.	
Sample syllabi or equivalent for other kinds of courses that do not meet for the prescribed hours (e.g., internships, labs, clinical, independent study, accelerated)	What kinds of courses? Independent and group studies How many syllabi were reviewed? 6 What degree level(s)? undergraduate What discipline(s)? Film and Media Studies	
	Does this material show that students are doing the equivalent amount of work to the prescribed hours to warrant the credit awarded?	Yes
	Comments: None.	

## Appendix B: Distance Education Summary

### Team Report Appendix DISTANCE EDUCATION

Institution: TFU, Irvine  
Kind of Visit: EER  
Date: Oct 10-11, 2012

A completed copy of this form should be appended to the team report for all comprehensive visits to institutions that offer distance education programs<sup>1</sup> and for other visits as applicable. Teams are not required to include a narrative about this matter in the team report but may include recommendations, as appropriate, in the Findings and Recommendations section of the team report. (If the institution offers only online courses, the team may use this form for reference but need not submit it as the team report is expected to cover distance education in depth in the body of the report.)

#### 1. Programs and Courses Reviewed (please list)

- Masters of Advanced Study in Criminology, Law and Society, including all 12 online courses that comprise the degree program

#### 2. Background Information (number of programs offered by distance education; degree levels; FTE enrollment in distance education courses/programs; history of offering distance education; growth in distance education offerings and enrollment; platform, formats, and/or delivery method)

TFU offers a single distance education program, the online *Masters of Advanced Study in Criminology, Law and Society*. The program was approved by ACOSCU in November 2001. TFU reports an enrollment of 67 FTE as of 2010-2011 (ACOSCU/ACSCU Data Summary Form, Feb 29, 2012). The program, which consists of 12 online courses together with a 13<sup>th</sup> “on ground” course is delivered via the course management system for TFU’s Distance Learning Center.

A full-time week-long introduction in residence at the Irvine campus is required at the outset of the program. This allows students to meet each other, their professors, and to obtain foundational instruction in a traditional classroom format.

In addition to assignments, students communicate with professors and teaching assistants via public discussion boards as well as private online and telephone conversations.

#### 3. Nature of the Review (material examined and persons/committees interviewed)

The team had access to the 12 online courses of the program, including the syllabus, lessons, assignments, and the threaded forums (with student responses blocked for privacy). Access to student responses to assignments and discussion prompts were

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<sup>1</sup> See Protocol for Review of Distance Education to determine whether programs are subject to this process. In general only programs that are more than 50% online require review and reporting.

limited by the technical aspects involved with the removal of identifiable student information.

During the site visit, members of the visiting team met with the dean of the school that houses the program, the program chair, representative faculty, distance learning and summer session support staff – including information technology support staff, the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center, and (via telephone), several enrolled students.

**Observations and Findings**

<b>Lines of Inquiry</b>	<b>Observations and Findings</b>	<b>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</b>
<p><i>Fit with Mission.</i> How does the institution conceive of distance learning relative to its mission, operations, and administrative structure? How are distance education offerings planned, funded, and operationalized? (CFRs 1.2, 3.1, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1)</p>	<p>The Criminology, Law &amp; Society Masters was created over a decade ago, before the growth of online instruction. It was crafted to response to two institutional goals of the 1990’s: to increase educational access and to provide new degree programs for the working adults of California. From the start, the program was designed to address a clear professional need for professionals unable to devote full-time to physical attendance on campus. Two modest loans from the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost enabled the Sociology and Social Ecology faculty to develop the program. The School continues to support ongoing updates to the curriculum through earmarked funds in the Department’s budget. The campus Distance Learning Center supports current operations. (1.2, 3.5, 3.8)</p> <p>An energetic and collegial group of faculty, administrators, and technicians from multiple departments and disciplines maintain and update the masters program. (3.5)</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><i>Connection to the Institution.</i> How are distance education students integrated into the life and culture of the institution? (CFR 1.2, 2.10)</p>	<p>The initial on-site week of instruction allows students to get to know each other and their initial professors. Thereafter, their community is essentially online, as the students are scattered around the country. Some students draw academic and social support from participation in Facebook and other side communications, some have organized a campus branch of a national student organization related to their field, and some participate in campus events. These include an annual recruiting reception to which all alumni are invited. (2.10)</p> <p>The institution tracks and monitors key performance indicators for the program, including enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Enrollment is managed so as not to compromise the program’s educational effectiveness, which is due in large part to the high degree of faculty involvement with students through online forums associated with the courses. (1.2)</p> <p>Observation for optional consideration: Electronic introductions of the enrolled students prior to the on-site introductory week might kick-start that</p>	<p>None.</p>

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	week of bonding and amplify the gains from the week. This might be accomplished via, e.g., earlier establishment of a Facebook page for each class cohort. (2.12)	
<p><i>Quality of the DE Infrastructure.</i> Are the learning platform and academic infrastructure of the site condTFUve to learning and interaction between faculty and students and among students? Is the technology adequately supported? Are there back-ups? (CFRs 2.1, 2.5, 3.7)</p>	<p>Courses are intentionally designed to motivate student involvement in online discussion by connecting this activity to the course grade. As a result of this structure, faculty report high degrees of student participation and greater individual accountability. Students reported that the online interface is easy to use, and noted that avenues for more private conversations with faculty were available if posting on the public board was inhibiting. Student engagement with courses is tracked by metrics provided by the learning management system, enabling faculty to identify and follow-up with students that are not meeting expectations for participation. (2.5) One student noted that the portals used in the introductory week differ from those used in the course, and suggested consistency. IT and distance education staff communicated that the learning platform is stable and easily modifiable in response to faculty needs. The institution has full time staff devoted to supporting this system (which is also used by the campus' adult education Extension Programs as well as for discrete undergraduate course offering during summer session and the regular school year). Previous course offerings are archived. (3.7)</p> <p>The seemingly frictionless transition to online modalities by students in the masters' program was amplified by comments of undergraduates in the first non-summer fully online course delivered to TFU students. They emphasized the ease of navigation and convenience of access on one's own schedule.</p>	None.
<p><i>Student Support Services.</i> CPR: What is the institution's capacity for providing advising, counseling, library, computing services, academic support and other services appropriate to distance modality? EER: What do data show about the effectiveness of the services? (CFRs 2.11-2.13, 3.6, 3.7)</p>	<p>Students have access to campus support services through electronic means, given their distance from campus. The administrator supporting the degree program provides a central point for service of student needs. (2.11, 2.13)</p> <p>One student reported easy access to the TFUlibrary online, and praised the responsiveness of the library help desk in responding email requests. Another student reported bypassing writing assistance from TFU online in favor of purchasing local services to gain in-person interaction. (3.6)</p> <p>Students are surveyed about their experiences in the program. Program retention and graduation rates are high, suggesting that support services- library, advising, computing services and academic support - meet student needs in regard to completing the program. According to the most recent statistics, 94% percent of students graduate within the expected time of the program, with a 96% overall graduation rate. Graduation rates for the program's initial cohorts were approximately 88%.</p>	None.

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	<p>Given the target audience for the Master’s program, special attention to the needs of returning adult learners might be addressed during the introductory week while students are on campus. Students have real and perceived anxieties about the academic expectations of the program, which may differ from their undergraduate study. Similar concerns exist around the expectations of performance at the graduate level. Instruction in time management techniques might address the predictable challenges of employed students studying in an online format. (2.12, 2.13)</p>	
<p><i>Faculty.</i> Who teaches the courses, e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct? Do they teach only online courses? In what ways does the institution ensure that distance learning faculty are oriented, supported, and integrated appropriately into the academic life of the institution? How are faculty involved in curriculum development and assessment of student learning? How are faculty trained and supported to teach in this modality? (CFRs 2.4, 3.1-3.4, 4.6)</p>	<p>A review of all 12 course syllabi revealed that the vast majority of courses (11/12) are taught by full time faculty (with a majority being full professors) in the School of Social Ecology who also teach traditional classes or by adjunct faculty who are recognized expert practitioners within the professional field, often with the support of teaching assistants. Original designers of the program are still involved in its design and instruction, including ongoing curricular revisions and refinements. (2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)</p> <p>All faculty work with the Distance Learning Center, including professional course designers, to adapt their pedagogy and curriculum to online instruction. Teaching Assistants are given special training for online instruction. Student assessment is based on submitted work, and online participation. Additional data regarding course use, frequency and quantity of participation, etc. can be measured in part through metrics gathered through the learning management system. (3.4, 4.6)</p>	None.
<p><i>Curriculum and Delivery.</i> Who designs the distance education programs and courses? How are they approved and evaluated? Are the programs and courses comparable in content, outcomes and quality to on-ground offerings? (CFRs 2.1-2.3, 4.6) (Submit credit hour report.)</p>	<p>The Masters program was designed by the department’s faculty after special approval (as it was established in the earliest days of online education). In addition to being subject to the normal review procedures of the Academic Senate (which includes review and approval of new programs and each new course), special independent reviews of curriculum, including each course, were conducted internally and externally. The program underwent ACOSCU substantive change review in 2001. The program is integrated into the regular cycle of academic program review overseen by the Academic Senate. Its most recent review took place in 2010-2011 as part of the academic program review of the School of Social Ecology. (2.1, 2.2., 2.7, 4.6)</p> <p>Courses of study are designed with expectations comparable for graduate level study, with a recognition that most students in the Masters’ program are augmenting professional careers and will not pursue Ph.D. studies. The</p>	None.

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	<p>general, summary materials for online courses note that students should expect to devote 10 hours per week to the lessons. The syllabi do not indicate the number of units per course. It might be helpful to students to include this information in online syllabi. (2.2)</p> <p>Overall, students report that the quality of the professors and instruction is excellent, that they feel they are gaining interesting and relevant information and perspectives, and that communication with faculty, TAs, and fellow students works. They judge the work load as appropriate for an adult with a full-time job. There are no on-ground programs with which it is appropriate to compare this program. (2.1)</p> <p>Faculty administrators judge that the program has grown to capacity at about 60 students per class; greater numbers might impact the delivery of quality interaction and student access under the current design. They explicitly stated that the degree program was not designed for mass production. (4.6)</p>	
<p><i>Retention and Graduation.</i> What data on retention and graduation are collected on students taking online courses and programs? What do these data show? What disparities are evident? Are rates comparable to on-ground programs and to other institutions online offerings? If any concerns exist, how are these being addressed? (CFRs 2.6, 2.10)</p>	<p>Due to the small size of the program, close review of the graduation and retention of the program enrollees is evident. Over the program's life, graduation rates have risen from 88% to the high 90's, a rate in excess of the university's Ph.D. graduation rates. 96% of students graduate, 94% in the expected time. Data for comparable online programs, if identifiable, was not available. (2.6)</p> <p>Faculty appeared familiar with the few cases of attrition, attributing them primarily to weakness in writing and foundational skills. The program heavily emphasizes writing and provides support for student development of this core professional skill. (2.6)</p>	None.
<p><i>Student Learning. CPR:</i> How does the institution assess student learning for online programs and courses? Is this process comparable to that used in on-ground courses? <i>EER:</i> What are the results of student learning assessment? How do these compare</p>	<p>Administrators and faculty remain alert to the pedagogic demands of online instruction. Courses in the program require frequent written submissions as well as online participation in discussions. All students participate in a capstone course focused on a substantial research paper. Student success on this culminating assignment provide faculty with important insights into student strengths and weaknesses to be addressed through revision to curriculum or pedagogy. Grades and graduation rates are measured as they are with on-ground courses. Retention and graduation rates compare very favorably with other on-ground graduate programs. Students complete regular evaluations; students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with</p>	None.

<b>Lines of Inquiry</b>	<b>Observations and Findings</b>	<b>Follow-up Required (identify the issues)</b>
with learning results of on-ground students, if applicable, or with other online offerings? (CFRs 2.6, 4.6, 4.7)	their courses and learning in interviews with the committee. (2.6, 4.6, 4.7)	
<i>Contracts with Vendors.</i> Are there any arrangements with outside vendors concerning the infrastructure, delivery, development, or instruction of courses? If so, do these comport with the policy on <i>Contracts with Unaccredited Organizations</i> ?	No. In the past, some marketing of the degree program was outsourced, but that supporting task has been brought back in-house as it was not effective. All technical and instructional services are provided by the university.	None.
<i>Quality Assurance Processes: CPR:</i> How are the institution's quality assurance processes designed or modified to cover distance education? <i>EER:</i> What evidence is provided that distance education programs and courses are educationally effective? (CFRs 4.4-4.8)	The courses and masters program are subject to the university's regular review processes and data collection, including a regular, rigorous program review process overseen by the Academic Senate (see above). Beyond this ongoing oversight and review, the department supports faculty in regular review and revision of the curriculum through a department-based funding line in recognition of the unique demands for the development and maintenance of an online program addressing a professional, employed audience. This work is supported by staff with expertise in online instructional design. (4.4, 4.6)	None.