

STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: January 11, 2006
STAFF: John A. Taylor
REVIEWED BY: Barbara Pollard Taylor

INSTITUTION: Saint Louis University, St. Louis, MO

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Lawrence Biondi, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A progress report due on 08/01/05 focused on student outcomes assessment.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The Higher Learning Commission office received the Saint Louis University (SLU) report and supporting materials on 7/27/05.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The team report of the April 2002 evaluation visit to SLU observed that specific learning outcomes for the core curriculum were underdeveloped and that there was *some confusion* about assessing individual student learning and assessing programs (14). The team further observed that improvements were needed in the use of data from assessment efforts to improve programs and enhance student learning. The SLU progress report and support documents addressed these challenges.

Following the team visit and report, SLU addressed its overarching challenge—to create a culture of evidence-based decision making that would support the de-centralized structure of the University, and affirm that curricular, instructional, and assessment programs meet University and academic programs goals. In addressing these challenges, the University took the following steps.

- ▶ Reviewed and refined the 23 University outcomes to their essential elements resulting in *Five Dimensions of the St. Louis University experience*. The Five Dimensions articulate with the mission of the University and serve as the framework for integrating all outcomes and assessment practices of the University.
- ▶ Departments submit documentation that course outcomes align with program outcomes and the University's Five Dimensions. Faculty in required core courses also identify outcomes, align these with the Five Dimensions, and articulate how the outcomes are assessed.

- ▶ Documentation of outcomes and assessment of required core courses are reviewed by the Associate Provost based on identified evaluation criteria.
- ▶ Office of Planning and Decision Resources conducts ongoing research presently focused on developing student perceptions during the undergraduate experience
- ▶ Annual assessment reports submitted by deans note the changes made or anticipated as a result of assessment findings. These findings inform practice to enhance student learning.
- ▶ Ongoing professional opportunities in the areas of instructional practices, outcomes alignment, articulation, and assessment are available for faculty development and to build leadership faculty leadership capacity.

Staff comments. The 2003 evaluation team challenged the University to address the assessment of the general education core and all degree programs and to show the utilization of assessment data to enhance student learning. In this progress report, SLU demonstrated that it is assessing student academic achievement at course, program, and institutional levels and is providing feedback about the quality of that learning. The *five dimensions of the Saint Louis University experience* engage and develop the "whole" student, and assessment results are fed back to faculty to enhance the curriculum and the pedagogy. SLU showed that it is collecting, analyzing, and using its assessment data, and demonstrating to students and the University's stakeholders the achievement of the broader institutional outcomes. Staff is encouraged by the University's response and further encourages the University to continue doing the "hard work" of assessment. No additional reports are required.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report focused on student outcomes assessment. No further reports are required. The institution's next comprehensive evaluation visit is scheduled in 2011-2012.