

QUALITY CHECKUP REPORT

Concordia University Chicago

River Forest, Illinois
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Background on Quality Checkups conducted by the Academic Quality Improvement Program

The Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) conducts Quality Checkup site visits to each institution during the fifth or sixth year in every seven-year cycle of AQIP participation. These visits are conducted by trained, experienced AQIP Reviewers to determine whether the institution continues to meet The Higher Learning Commission's *Criteria for Accreditation*, and whether it is using quality management principles and building a culture of continuous improvement as participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) requires. The goals of an AQIP Quality Checkup are to:

1. Affirm the accuracy of the organization's online Systems Portfolio and verify information included in the portfolio that the last Systems Appraisal has identified as needing clarification or verification (System Portfolio Clarification and Verification);
2. Review with organizational leaders actions taken to capitalize on the strategic issues and opportunities for improvement identified by the last Systems Appraisal (Systems Appraisal Follow Up);
3. Alert the organization to areas that need its attention prior to Reaffirmation of Accreditation, and reassure it concerning areas that have been covered adequately (Accreditation Issues Follow Up);
4. Verify federal compliance issues such as default rates, complaints, USDE interactions and program reviews, etc. (Federal Compliance Review); and
5. Assure continuing organizational quality improvement commitment through presentations, meetings, or sessions that clarify AQIP and Commission accreditation work (Organizational Quality Commitment).

The AQIP peer reviewer(s) trained for this role prepare for the visit by reviewing relevant organizational and AQIP file materials, particularly the organization's last *Systems Appraisal Feedback Report* and the Commission's internal *Organizational Profile*, which summarizes information reported by the institution in its *Annual Institutional Data Update*. The report provided to AQIP by the institution is also shared with the evaluator(s). Copies of the Quality Checkup report are provided to the institution's CEO and AQIP liaison. A copy is retained by the Commission for the institution's permanent file, and will be part of the materials reviewed by the AQIP Review Panel during Reaffirmation of Accreditation.

Clarification and verification of contents of the institution's *Systems Portfolio*

The Team reviewed the Systems Portfolio before arriving for the Quality Checkup visit to gain an understanding of the Concordia University Chicago (CUC). During the visit, the Team verified and clarified the contents of the System Portfolio through discussions held with the President, Provost, President's Cabinet, AQIP Planning Team, Strategic Planning Team, Action Project Teams, and various cross-functional groups that included students, administrators, faculty, and staff. We note that since the time of the Systems Portfolio and Systems Appraisal that the institution has changed its name from Concordia University River Forest (CURF) to Concordia University Chicago (CUC). When the Quality Checkup team speaks in this report the name of the institution will be used in its current and changed form. However, when citing feedback or excerpting from the Systems Appraisal, then the language of the appraisal team will be used and the referent will be CURF.

The team learned and could verify that the leadership at CUC accepted, for the most part, the Systems Portfolio that they had submitted to the Higher Learning Commission as a fair reflection of the institution at the time. However, the leadership team realized that there were also points of confusion and omission to the CUC Systems Portfolio which they wished to clarify.

Example of a Point of Confusion: The Ends Policy, and lack of any follow-up data, was noted in Systems Appraisal as an opportunity for improvement, and it was emphasized also as an important area to be addressed by its inclusion as one of the six Strategic Insights. Further conversation during the Quality Checkup clarified that the Ends Policies relate to external stakeholder satisfaction with community resources provided by CUC as these resources are perceived to reflect the University's mission as a Christ-centered institution. In the absence of other institutional indicators, the data from the Ends Policy may have taken on a greater role in the Systems Portfolio narrative than its limited scope would have suggested that it might have been given. Now that the institution has moved on to develop a more robust system of indicators, the missing data from the Ends Policy do not appear to be of the same importance. CUC staff indicated that the End Policies data are no longer of the same importance in the story which the institution has to tell about itself; this data does not constitute key indicators for the Strategic Plan nor does it provide direct measures of student performance. The visiting team noted that in light of new directions, and given the limited scope of the Ends Policy data, that CUC seemed to be better served by its refocus on key data.

Example of an Omission: The System Appraisal report indicated that CUC had not identified sufficient measures to assess the attainment of the “other distinctive objectives” identified in the System Portfolio. The Appraisal feedback indicated implicit distinctive objectives were not adequately measured and that daily chapel attendance should not be the primary measure of these objectives. In response the AQIP Planning Council realized that the Systems Portfolio had not made reference to other activities that could provide reflective insights on, or other measures of, the core value of compassion. In response to this omission, the CUC Quality Checkup Report noted that there are numerous opportunities, beyond Chapel, for faculty, staff, and students to demonstrate the core value of compassion. These include:

- Five mission trips during the 2005-06 academic year to assist the victims of the hurricanes in New Orleans involving approximately ninety faculty, staff, and students.
- One international mission trip to the Czech Republic during summer 2006 where faculty and staff participated in a Habitat for Humanity building project.
- Spring break 2006 mission trip to Appalachia sponsored and attended by students in the Director of Christian Education program. These are annual events that involve approximately twenty students.
- Summer mission trip to Mexico sponsored by student-led campus ministries involving staff and students.
- A Deaconess Mission trip to Latin America.
- Various service learning activities integrated in the First Year Experience course (Freedom & Responsibility) and the senior capstone course (Values & Virtues).
- Other service learning projects in undergraduate courses in business and social sciences.
- Student service organizations
- Continuing activities organized by CU-Cares
 1. Weeks of Welcome Service Day (i.e. OPRF Food Pantry, Marrillac House, British Home, and Greater Chicago Food Depository)
 2. Academic Year Relationships/Projects (i.e. Bethel and LIDERr)

Because of the increasing number of service learning projects and activities, CUC has authorized the establishment of the full-time faculty position, Director of Academic Service Learning beginning in the 2007 – 08 academic year. (Excerpted from CUC’s Quality Program Summary, March 1, 2007, p. 5-6).

In addition to coordinating the service-learning activities, the Quality Checkup team perceives an opportunity for new Director of Academic Service Learning to provide leadership for the assessment of outcomes for service-learning.

In the Quality Checkup Team's judgment, CUC presented satisfactory evidence that it met goal one of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Review of specific accreditation issues identified by the institution's last Systems Appraisal

The Systems Appraisal review team had identified one accreditation issue related to Category 1, Helping Students Learn. "If the Systems Portfolio is an accurate statement of the extent of CURF's assessment efforts then there does not appear to be any general education assessment (or plan for incorporating information from future assessments) at CURF."

The team believes that the institution has made significant improvement through its selection and initial implementation of a standard survey for the assessment of learning goals within general education. Also the assessment of general education forms one of the three current Action Projects for the institution. This Action Project was formed in direct response to the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. As described by Concordia University in their preparation for the Quality Checkup, the Action Project centers upon the review of the institutional practice of "Senior Testing" and the selection of a new standardized test to replace one that was no longer found to be useful for measuring general education outcomes.

Up until 2004-05 academic year, the university maintained a "Senior Testing" program making use of the College Outcomes Measures Program (COMP) from ACT and The Academic Profile (TAP) from ETS to assess the competencies included in the university's general education curriculum. (However) the results of the testing program could not be used to assess the effectiveness of Concordia's general education curriculum. It became clear that a different approach and possibly a different instrument was needed. The staff of the Office of University Research Services (OURS) was charged with this task. After researching the available instruments the staff of OURS recommended that the university make use of Measurement of Academic Proficiency and Progress – Abbreviated Form for Online Administration (MAPP) to assess the general education curriculum. Beginning with the fall 2007 semester all students

registered for the First Year Experience course, Freedom & Responsibility and the senior capstone course, Values & Virtues, were required to complete the MAPP. Freshmen were included in the testing program to provide baseline data that could be used in four years as a comparison of the results recorded when those students completed the instrument as seniors. At the end of the spring 2007 semester data from both the fall and spring semester will be available and will be compared to the norms produced for this years testing. (Excerpted from CUC's Quality Program Summary, March 1, 2007, pp. 7-8)

At the time of the Quality Checkup visit there was no data available from the MAPP testing, however, data for the first cohort of students had been submitted and the institution was awaiting its first report. The Quality Checkup team recommends that CUC continue to analyze and disseminate the MAPP data and to connect it to other initiatives such as the work of defining liberal learning in the College of Arts and Sciences.

A second area of improved practice at CUC is with measuring its faith-based learning outcomes for students. The concern with measuring the learning outcomes for its faith-based curriculum was amplified in the Systems Appraisal feedback which stated while it is commendable that CURF respects standards and learning objectives recommended by various programmatic accreditors, there appears to be no internally generated system for reviewing and recommending students learning outcomes apart from these external agencies. This would seem especially important for a faith-based institution which has other learning objectives not common to non-religious programmatic accreditors.

Progress noted by the team included the report in which CUC described the following set of activities that had been set in motion and which were verified by the team through conversations with the Dean and individual faculty members. The Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, together with the eleven departments assigned to this college, took the lead on defining liberal learning in their faith-based institution. In December 2006 they completed the first stage of their work by identifying the characteristics of a liberal arts culture desired for CUC students and faculty. These characteristics are identified in a document called "Liberal Arts at Concordia" and will appear in the 2007-2008 Undergraduate Catalog. The second stage of their work has been to develop "tangible ideas" that would make the statement "come to life." Sixty ideas were generated by the faculty members and in February 2007 the college faculty selected three ideas to pursue for implementation in the 2007-08 academic year. The Dean is appointing three task

forces to examine each idea and recommend means of implementation and assessment. The task forces will report their recommendations to the College of Arts and Sciences at an April meeting. This project is ongoing with activities scheduled during the bi-monthly meetings of the faculty of the college. (Paraphrased from CUC's Quality Program Summary, March 1, 2007, p. 5)

The Quality Checkup team sees the work already undertaken and the plans of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences as responding to opportunities identified in the Systems Appraisal and therefore recommends continuation with this good work.

Additional progress in the assessments of General Education was noted:

- CUC has designed its own internal instrument, the Student Climate survey, which explores the impact of core values in the student experience through students' self report.
- CUC plans to return to NSSE as part of its focus on freshmen retention and to also add the first year version of the survey. The Student Climate survey will be alternated with NSSE so that benchmark data on student engagement can be added.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met goal two of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Review of the institution's approach to capitalizing on recommendations identified by its last Systems Appraisal in the *Strategic Issues Analysis*.

Six strategic insights were provided in the Systems Appraisal to CUC (then named CURF):

1. CURF appears to have a graduate college that is completely separate from its other colleges, particularly in terms of student-learning assessment, as well as in terms of any other form of data gathering.

More specific feedback in the Systems Appraisal added that while almost one half of CUC's students are at the graduate level, learning objectives at the graduate level are not as specific and would be difficult to measure.

Progress noted by the team included improvement in the assessment of graduate curriculum. Data derived from graduate cohort surveys reported, for example, that graduate students

experienced overlapping course material in multiple classes in the Curriculum and Instruction program. As a follow-up a comprehensive curriculum mapping effort was undertaken, which involved reviewing learning goals, content, and learning activities with the goal of eliminating unnecessary duplication, while ensuring appropriate coverage. As a result, the graduate curriculum was significantly changed. Beyond the cohort surveys, CUC has initiated an Action Project on the assessment of graduate education.

2. CURF's separate graduate college approach appears unconnected to CURF's faith based mission and goals.

Additional System Appraisal feedback stated that alignment with the university's mission and purpose at the graduate level is less structured; no system or process was described.

Progress noted by the team included the creation of an orientation for adjunct faculty, the majority of who teach in the graduate programs, called CAFÉ in which the mission and core values of CUC are shared. As explained to the team, CAFÉ (Concordia Adjunct Faculty Education) is a day long professional development event for all adjunct faculty members. University mission and policies, program requirements, curriculum and logistics are reviewed at this event. Handouts from CAFÉ were shared with the team.

3. There is a great deal of time, discussion, and credence, particularly in the "results" section, paid to the "Ends Policies" established by the Board of Regents. Yet the policies established were never shared in the Systems Portfolio, nor are they available at the CURF website.

As discussed earlier as a clarification in section one, the End Policies have now been absorbed by the measures of the new strategic plan at CUC.

4. CURF provides many examples of isolated "best practices" and anecdotal evidence of successes, but these do not appear to be part of an integrated plan of ongoing assessment.

Progress was noted by the team in three areas; the assessment of general education through MAPPS, the cohort surveys and curriculum mapping at the graduate level, and the collaboration between the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences at the programmatic level. The three current Action Projects at CUC address the assessment of student learning and student retention, and thus the institution appears to have taken very seriously the Systems Appraisal feedback on its lack of an integrated plan for assessment. The assessment of general

education has been discussed previously in section two concerning accreditation issues, and the assessment of graduate students has been discussed earlier in this section with strategic insight one. Remaining here is the need for a clarification of the teaming that occurs between Education and Arts and Sciences faculty members. Systems Appraisal feedback restated the strategic insight in even more specific terms. It stated that the College of Education has a Unit Assessment Program but it was not described. Further the feedback stated that the College of Arts and Sciences appeared to have no viable assessment program.

The team was able to clarify, for the undergraduate level, that the practices of the College of Education have benefits outside of the unit itself. Due to the centrality of education programs at the CUC, many students are housed both in Education and Arts and Sciences. The increased focus by NCATE upon the content areas of education has resulted in a joint system of review in which Education and Arts and Sciences faculty must team in the evaluation of education majors. Through such collaboration there has been a sharing of assessment practices across departments at CUC. Progress noted involves the clarification that the Unit Assessment System manages the collection and storage for all campus electronic portfolios. Faculty from the College of Education, the College of Graduate and Innovative Programs, and the College of Arts and Sciences are involved in the electronic portfolio process. For example, Arts and Sciences faculty are involved in the determination of appropriate portfolio content for all secondary education majors. Arts and Sciences faculty also work closely with the College of Education faculty as part of the Specialized Professional Association (SPA) assessment processes. Arts and Sciences faculty develop and administer content related assessments to candidates in teacher education programs.

5. CURF has identified many areas of major concern, yet did not address how they plan to overcome the vast majority of these concerns.

The areas of concern noted in the strategic insight are now addressed in the institution's strategic plan. The team received a presentation and copy of the CUC Strategic Plan 2006, which was dated September 15, 2006. This plan was approved by the Board of Regents and appears to have wide-spread support across the institution. In meeting with faculty, staff, student and administrative representatives, the team inquired about knowledge of the strategic plan, and the team received confirming comments that the plan was central to institutional planning. The next opportunity for CUC will be the coordination of the AQIP Council with the

Strategic Planning Council. Conversations were initiated during the Quality Checkup which indicated that the institution is aware of this opportunity for the alignment of efforts.

6. The only assessment done at CURF is required by others. There is no culture of assessment, or a plan for the inclusion or internalization of such.

This strategic insight is addressed in section two, accreditation issues, and above in this section with strategic insights one and four. To repeat and summarize the findings on assessment, progress was found in the assessment of general education, graduate and undergraduate programs. One comment was made by the Associate Director of University Research which reflects the culture shift toward assessment: "The climate on campus has changed now that people are looking for data rather than ignoring data."

More specific Systems Appraisal feedback stated while CURF lists a number of measurements that are collected, there appears to be no process for using this data to improve learning. A comprehensive quality improvement process that includes a feedback loop is necessary to insure that improvements are based upon quality principles. Progress noted by the Checkup team involves a clarification and confirmation of the role of the Office of University Research and Evaluation Department in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data to the entire institution.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met goal three of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Review of organizational commitment to continuing systematic quality improvement

The Quality Checkup Team found a number of examples that processes to make continuous quality improvement systematic and on-going are in place at CUC. The campus AQIP Planning Council was appointed by the President after institutional representatives attended their second AQIP Strategy Forum in the spring of 2006. The Council has been active in coordinating continuous improvement on campus, selecting the next generation of AQIP Action Projects, continuing to respond to the Systems Appraisal ratings of O and OO, and updating the Systems Portfolio. Three active Action Projects were reviewed by the team, 1) General Education Assessment, 2) Academic Early Warning System, and 3) Graduate Program Evaluation. The

projects were addressing important institutional issues by involving a broad cross section of the campus community in changes aimed at improvement.

Another significant initiative that demonstrates and organizational commitment to systematic quality improvement is the Strategic Planning Process that has occurred over the past two years. The appraisal of Category 8 (Planning) in the CURF Systems Portfolio highlighted many O and OO opportunities to improve planning on campus. The institution took these opportunities seriously and mounted a thorough planning process that has involved representatives from all segments of the university community in the development of a set of core values based upon CUC's mission. The identification of core values led to a vision statement and the identification of strategic goals for the immediate and near future. Included in the strategic planning process was the decision to change Concordia University's name modifier from "River Forest" to "Chicago." As CUC takes the strategic plan to an operational level, an opportunity exists to align planning across campus related to the AQIP process, strategic planning, the development campaign, and other campus operations.

Other quality initiatives were shared with and observed by the Team, including the following Fall/Spring 2006-07 Additional Quality Initiatives:

1. Mathematics Department: Redesign of Basic Course Offerings
2. Honor Code Implementation & Evaluation
3. Communications Taskforce to Address Faculty & Staff Climate
4. Core Values Approved
5. Employee Covenant Adopted
6. Bi-Annual Faculty Staff Climate Survey Administered
7. Parent's Advisory Board Established
8. President's Advisory Board Rejuvenated
9. Faculty Committee Streamlining and Restructuring Project

Recommendation: The Quality Checkup Team was impressed by the level of continuous improvement activity, but would offer one caution. Many of the initiatives are not well connected and could go off in parallel directions trying to accomplish similar goals and compete for the same resources. This is particularly the case for the AQIP Planning Council, the Strategic Planning Council and some Institutional Research activities. There is overlap in membership of these two councils, but not everyone recognizes the interrelated nature of their work. The

Strategic Planning Council's efforts to implement the strategic plan may find value in the AQIP process to put the strategic goals into action. Following the Checkup Visit and the Reaffirmation of Accreditation, the revision of the CUC Systems Portfolio provides an opportunity to address the integration of planning efforts on campus.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

USDE issues related to default rate (renewal of eligibility, program audits, or other USDE actions)

The team met with a group of administrators responsible for various aspects of compliance with U. S. Department of Education and Higher Learning Commission expectations. The institution had prepared a Compliance Material Packet that was shared with the Quality Checkup team.

Concordia University reported two educational loan default rates. The first for the Federal Family Educational Loan (FFEL) remained low over the years reported and below the 2005 National Average of 5.1%.

| FY2002 | FY2003 | FY2004 | FY2005 | FY2006 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| 2.9% | 2.5% | 3.3% | 3.3% | not available |

The institution is proud of this low rate and will continue to strive to reduce these rates even further.

The second default rate was reported for the Perkins loan program. These rates are higher than desired because the institution did not pay much attention to collecting payment from this loan program administered directly by CUC until recently. Collections have increased significantly to the point where the annual amount available for Perkins Loans has increased from a low point of \$75,000 to almost \$300,000.

| 6/30/04 | 6/30/05 | 6/30/06 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 37.7% | 25.0% | 42.0% |

The institution anticipates that the default rate on 6/30/07 will be below 20% and will continue to decline because of significant changes in the management of this loan program, more

individualized attention to students, and efforts to increase loan consolidation.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Compliance with Commission Policy IV.A.8, Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit

The following notice was published in local and community newspapers (*Forest Leaves*, *Wednesday Journal & Chicago Tribune*), the regional publication of the sponsoring church body (*Northern Light*), and was included as an e-mail announcement to faculty, staff, and students of the university. A fax from the Commission to the team members noted that no third party comments were received. This information along with the accompanying statement from the Commission was shared with the institution.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy 1.C.7, Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

The Team collected information from a *Compliance Material Packet* prepared by Concordia, the university catalogs, and the university website. Concordia University operates on the semester system. August through May is divided into two semesters of approximately 16 weeks each. A two-week May Term and a twelve-week summer term make it possible for a student to earn additional semester hours of credit beyond those earned during the regular academic year. The unit of credit is the semester hour. Normally, one equivalent semester hour of credit is awarded on the basis of one 50-minute class session per week. The outside preparation required is approximately twice the time spent in class. Double/triple laboratory periods requiring less preparation are equivalent to a single lecture period. Most of the undergraduate courses offered carry three semester hours of credit.

Undergraduate degree programs require the student to complete a minimum of 128 semester hours of coursework as outlined in the Undergraduate Catalog of the university. This minimum

requirement can be satisfied by completing an average of 16 semester hours of course work for each of eight semesters attended. At least one academic year (32 semester hours) of study in residence is required for graduation, preferably the last year before graduation. Students desiring to receive the Lutheran Teachers Diploma are required to complete additional coursework in theology as prescribed by the College of Education and the sponsoring church body (The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod).

The unit of credit for the university graduate programs is the semester hour. Each of the two sixteen week semesters is divided into two eight week session during which graduate courses are offered. The majority of summer courses are also scheduled using the eight week format. Courses meet one day per week during these eight week sessions for a total of four clock hours per week (240 minutes) and a student typically completes one course in each of these sessions. Instructors utilize WebCT software to augment the in-class-instruction to augment the total “seat time” to reach the traditional norms. The out-of-class preparation for the graduate students is expected to exceed twice the amount of time spent in class.

In addition to the courses required for each master’s program, all graduate students are required to complete a capstone experience before they are certified as a program completer. The following capstone options are available to these students:

- Thesis and Oral Defense
- Independent Research paper
- Written and Oral Examination Based on Assigned Readings
- Internship/Practicum Experience and Comprehensive Paper and Oral Defense
- Recital/Composition Paper and Oral Defense
- Portfolio and Oral Defense
- Student Designed Capstone

The capstone experiences available for the various programs are listed in the Graduate Catalog. Below find all tuition rates per credit hour for all graduate on-campus, graduate cohort, and doctoral programs.

In the team’s judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution’s approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP’s expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy IV.B.2, *Advertising and Recruitment Materials*

Concordia University made samples of the organization's advertising and recruitment materials available to the Quality Checkup team, which reviewed a number of publications that the institution uses to promote its programs and recruit students. After discussion with various Concordia faculty and staff members about its approach to advertising and recruitment materials, the team determined that Interior College presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Compliance with Commission policy III.A.1, *Professional Accreditation*, and III.A.3, *Requirements of Organizations Holding Dual Institutional Accreditation*

Various undergraduate and graduate programs of the university are currently accredited or are in the process of becoming accredited. The following table provides information concerning those programs that are currently accredited.

| Program(s) | Accreditation Agency | Next Renewal Date |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| Initial Teacher Certification Programs (Graduate and Undergraduate) | National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) | Fall 2009 |
| Initial Teacher Certification Programs (Graduate and Undergraduate) | Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) | Fall 2009 |
| Community Counseling (Graduate) School Counseling (Graduate) | Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) | June 30, 2011 |
| Bachelor of Arts in Music Bachelor of Music Education Master of Church Music | National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) | 2008-09 Academic Year |

The table below lists the programs of the university where accreditation is being sought by the appropriate academic departments of the university.

| Program(s) | Accreditation Agency | Status |
|--|--|--|
| Social Work Program (Undergraduate) | Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) | Precandidacy Stage |
| Business Program(s) (Undergraduate) | International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE) | Site Visit Fall 2007 or Spring 2008 |

The Quality Checkup team recommended that Concordia include contact information about accreditors in the catalogs and on the institution's website. The website listing only listed the names of accrediting organizations. The listing can be found at:

http://cuchicago.edu/admission/concordia_factbook.asp#accreditations

Accreditations

- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
- National Association of Schools of Music

In line with policy of the Higher Learning Commission, the team recommended that the institution include the Commission's phone number and either the address or a hotlink to the Commission's URL when reference is made to the affiliation with the HLC. The same should be provided for the other accrediting organizations. The team suggested correcting this immediately on the CUC website and at the next printing of hard copy material.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it mostly met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were close to compliance with Commission and AQIP's expectations with the requested correction noted above.

Compliance with Commission policy IV.B.4, *Organizational Records of Student Complaints*

Concordia University has a multifaceted approach to receiving and disposing of nontrivial complaints. Student complaints fall into one of two categories: academic or nonacademic. The student handbook, which outlines for the students the appropriate steps for registering a complaint, is accessible to all Concordia faculty, staff, and students via the university's intranet. Additionally, all students receive a hard copy of the student handbook at the beginning of the academic year. Copies of this handbook were made available to the visiting team during the Checkup visit. Student complaint procedures were explained as follows in the *Compliance Material Packet*:

Academic Complaints

If a student has a complaint about an evaluation, course content, or course procedure, the student is first encouraged to talk with the instructor of the course. If the complaint is not disposed of at this level, then the student must adhere to the following route when appealing the decision of the instructor: The Department Chairperson; The College Dean; The Sr. Vice President for Academics; The President; The Board of Regents. As with all official appeals, they must be submitted in writing and clearly state the basis for the appeal. Once an appeal is submitted and reviewed by the university official, the student will receive a written response to the appeal. All appeals are to be handled fairly and expediently. All records pertaining to academic complaints are kept with the appropriate college dean. Every effort is made to resolve the complaint at the appropriate level.

Non – Academic Complaints

The student handbook clearly defines both the formal and informal complaint reporting processes for matters of sex discrimination, as defined by Title IX, and sexual harassment. In matters of sex discrimination, the grievant is asked to first discuss the matter with the alleged offender. If the matter is not resolved at this level, then the student should speak with the next person in authority in the alleged offender area. If the matter can not be appropriately disposed of through informal means, then the student must begin the formal complaint process by submitting a written complaint to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint must state the nature of the complaint, the evidence on

which it is based, a statement of the informal procedure result, and the redress sought. The coordinator, in accordance with Title IX regulations, will determine if the grievance is applicable to the rules of Title IX. If so, the coordinator will attempt to solve the grievance. The grievant and the alleged offender will be notified in writing of the decision. If one of the parties feels that the matter was not disposed of appropriately, then they must submit in writing a request for a Title IX hearing committee to be assembled to review the case. Either party can continue the appeal route beyond the hearing committee to the President and eventually to the Board of Regents. Every effort is made to resolve the complaint at the appropriate level. Additionally, official notification is made in writing to both the grievant and the alleged offender. Records of all Title IX sex discrimination complaints are kept with the Title IX coordinator.

Concordia University's student handbook outlines for students, staff, and faculty what specifically constitutes sexual harassment, and subsequently what steps should be taken if someone feels that they have been discriminated against. Students that feel that they have been subjected to sexual harassment are asked to immediately report the situation to any member of the University's administrative cabinet, any departmental dean level administrator, or the Director of Human Resources. Legitimacy of the complaint is initially determined by the Director of Human Resources and the Vice President for Administration, and at which point the determination is made as to the university official that will independently investigate the complaint. All records, files, and related materials to the investigation involving a student sexual harassment complaint are kept in the office of the Vice President for Student Life.

All other non-academic student complaints are directed to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students is responsible for determining the legitimacy of the complaint, and responsible for directing the student to the appropriate university representative that can best assist the student with their complaint. All non-trivial written complaints and dispositions, excluding matters of sex discrimination and sexual harassment, are kept with the Dean of Students.

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Other USDE compliance-related issues related to Title IV of the Higher Education Act, The Clery Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Audits

The Student Financial Planning Office is audited on a yearly basis to assure compliance with Title IV Federal regulations. The last A-133 audit, June 30, 2006, showed no material findings with regard to the processing of Federal aid. This was also the case for the previous year's audit.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission last performed an audit in June 2005. They reviewed a sample of State and Federal programs for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 academic-years. There were no findings related to Pell or the verification process, and only one loan related issue was identified. As of this time, all issues have been addressed and steps taken to guard against repeat findings.

The United States Department of Education has authorized Concordia University Chicago to participate in the Title IV, HEA Program with Provisional Approval until June 30, 2009. Concordia University Chicago has been on Provisional Certification status since June of 2006 due to a USDOE financial ratio analysis of the June 30, 2005 financial statements. The Vice-President for Finance reported that progress has been made to correct the financial ratios since the institution's financial crisis of 2001-2003.

Campus Security Policy and Report

The Campus Security Policy and Report was viewed by the team and is available to the public at: http://www.cuchicago.edu/student_life/security/annual_security_report.pdf

FERPA

Concordia University Chicago has complied with FERPA and information was reviewed by the team at: <http://www.cuchicago.edu/registrar/ferpa.asp>

In the team's judgment, the institution presented satisfactory evidence that it met this goal of the Quality Checkup. The institution's approach to the issue, documentation, and performance were acceptable and comply with Commission and AQIP's expectations.

Other AQIP issues

Concordia University Chicago faced a financial crisis in 2001 to 2003 that led challenges to the

institution's image and future viability as the extent of the problems became known. The Quality Checkup Team learned of the financial turn around story of CUC. As Tom Hallett, the institution's Chief Financial Officer, explained, CUC has gone from a point in 2003 where the institution was within 36 hours of having to shut the doors and cease operation, to a point where the annual operating budget is in the black and a significant amount of debt has been paid.

It is the opinion of the Quality Checkup Team that AQIP membership was one of the elements that created the culture for improvement that is evident in the story of CUC's financial journey over the last six years. The CFO's report is shared as an Appendix to CUC's Quality Summary. Appendix A – Concordia University Chicago Financial Status.