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2003 Evidence Requiring Institutional Attention

North Central Association - Higher Learning Commission

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ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT
February 24-26, 2003

Evidence that demonstrates that the criterion needs institutional attention:

CRITERION ONE

a. There is a significant degree of ambiguity at the university around **"brand identity,"** mission, and core values. It is imperative that the institution craft **revised mission and vision statements** to relieve the ambiguity about the desired balance between liberal arts programs and professional programs. Mission and vision statements that receive broad support will facilitate the development of integrated marketing and visibility plans and will support a strong enrollment management program.

b. In virtually every interaction with students, faculty, administration, and staff, the team heard statements supporting the importance of increasing the ethnic, racial, and cultural **diversity** of each constituent group. The university community made clear its on-going commitment to the university's stated mission to reflect these diversities.

CRITERION TWO

a. Although IWU has done an impressive job of increasing enrollment and adding new facilities and grounds since the last accreditation visit, there has not been a commensurate increase of staff to manage the increased load. The **lack of adequate staff** to support these additions creates significant stress and pressure to get things done, and points to the need to address the human resources necessary to manage the institution's growth.

b. The team encountered an openly acknowledged **climate of mistrust** and an expressed difficulty of disagreeing amicably that endangers collegiality and threatens to make it difficult to advance the teaching and learning goals necessary to fulfill IWU's mission and vision. Faculty spoke widely of lowered morale, a "culture of conflict," an "us vs. them" climate.

c. The team encountered a campus perception that **decision-making is mostly driven from the top** without sufficient opportunity for grass-roots participation and feedback; campus leadership must find ways to address this issue.

d. The **current assumptions that drive the multi-year budget-planning model** for predicting revenues and expenditures are optimistic, aggressive, and overly dependent upon the maturation of deferred gifts. The uncertainties of national and regional economies will challenge even the most prudent of budget planning models.

e. A 36% decrease in **market value of the endowment** (\$213 million to \$136 million) coupled with substantial bonded indebtedness (\$73.8 million) relative to the size of the operating budget (\$61.4 million) presents significant challenges for sustaining institutional visions and aspirations.

f. **Faculty personnel files** need updating to ensure that they include an official transcript of each faculty member's professional degrees.

CRITERION THREE

a. The team encountered **faculty tension and frustration about the new general education program and its impact on departmental course offerings and staffing**, for the program pulls faculty FTE away from needed departmental offerings. The current assessment of the Gateway program is needed and timely, and should proceed quickly to its completion.

b. Again, the educational mission of the university would be better served with greater ethnic, racial, and cultural **diversity** of students, faculty, and staff.

CRITERION FOUR

a. The Self-Study Report documents requests for **additional faculty** from every department but one. At a current student-faculty ratio of 12:1 and significant short-term budget challenges, IWU campus leadership will need to find widely supported strategies for resource allocations.

CRITERION FIVE

a. The benefit package at IWU should be equitable among all employee classifications. Specifically, the team affirms the Self-Study Report recommendation to **extend tuition benefits to the children of all IWU employees.**