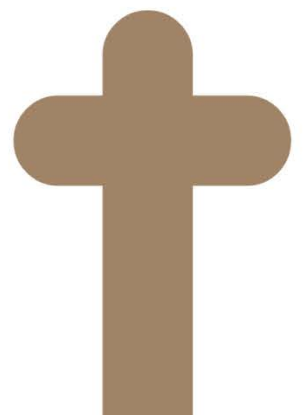


Benchmarks for Excellence



Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools



Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) as a national accrediting agency for Christian postsecondary institutions that offer certificates, diplomas, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees, including distance learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The Accreditation Commission and staff of Transnational Association of Colleges and Schools believe that the Benchmarks system, developed as an outcome of the Reliability-Validity study, provides a valuable tool in the overall accreditation process and in institutional development.

The Benchmarks contain relevant behavioral examples or indexes of varying levels of performance on each of the Standards. Benchmarks are written for each of the scale values: 5 = Far Exceeds the Standard, 4 = Exceeds the Standard, 3 - Meets the Standard, 2 = Falls Below the Standard, 1 - Fails to Meet the Standard. The behavioral examples are developed to reflect the various performance levels for each of the Benchmark indicators.

The Benchmarks serve several purposes. They are important to ensure the consistent application of the Accreditation Standards, in providing the members of the on-site evaluation team a common behavioral “frame of reference” for the evaluation of the institution’s compliance level with each of the Standards, and for gauging the educational performance of a particular institution. The institution will also find the Benchmarks important in the self-evaluation process and for indicating quality characteristics in critical areas of institutional improvement

The ultimate outgrowth of Benchmarks would be to lead the institution in assessing the accomplishment of its mission.

INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT BENCHMARK DEFINITIONS

- 4 EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:
Results and attained goals CONSISTENTLY EXCEED what is normally expected of an institution. Substantially contribute to the advancement of Christian education by reaching beyond what is normally expected in terms of spiritual development, creative faculty and student innovations and institutional improvements introduced.
- 3 MEETS THE STANDARD:
Results and attained goals CONSISTENTLY MEET what is normally expected on an institution of this size. Consistently meets the TRACS standards in Financial Integrity, Faculty Organization, Policies and Procedures, etc.
- 2 FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:
Results and attained goals CONSISTENTLY FALL BELOW the TRACS standard in one or more key areas such as Financial Integrity, Faculty Organization, Policies and Procedures, Governing Board, etc.
- 1 FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:
Results DO NOT MEET expectations in numerous key areas. Fails to meet describes inadequate, incomplete, incorrect, or untimely work results that hamper adversely affect the institution's effectiveness.

I. FOUNDATIONAL STANDARDS

A. Biblical Foundations

Biblical foundations and tenets shall be included in the institution's official publications. This will allow prospective students, faculty, board members, and others to be informed regarding the theological and religious position of the institution.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The statement on Biblical Foundations is well written and comprehensive; administrators, faculty, board members, and students have indicated agreement with the statement; the statement is available in writing in most printed publications such as the catalog and handbook. It is in full agreement with TRACS Biblical Foundations and it is approved by the board of trustees. Students, faculty, board members and administrators clearly indicate that they have read, understand, and respect the Biblical Foundations.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The written statement on Biblical Foundations is satisfactory. The statement is printed in some primary publications such as the catalog and other critical documents. It is in agreement with TRACS Biblical Foundations; is approved by the board of trustees. Most students, faculty, board members, and administrators indicate that the majority of these individuals have read, understand, and respect the Biblical Foundations.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The statement on Biblical Foundations is poorly written; administrators, faculty, board members, and students have not indicated agreement with the statement; the statement is not available in printed publications such as the catalog, handbooks, and other critical documents. It is not wholly in agreement with TRACS Biblical Foundations and not approved by the board of trustees.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

No written or published statement of Biblical Foundations is available; administrators and faculty are not able to articulate the Biblical Foundations or tenants of the institution; the focus of education is not biblical and heretical. The Board shows no interest in developing such a statement.

B. Purpose and Objectives

The institution must state clearly and concisely its specific purpose, which is appropriate for Christian higher education within the general scope of postsecondary education and consistent with the accrediting agency' statement on purpose defined herein. The statement of purpose defines the distinctive character and nature of the institution and provides the basis on which students are received. The purpose statement must be used as the basic guide in planning, development, evaluation, policy-making and all other institutional functions. Educational goals are to be formulated which are (a) consistent with the institution's purpose and philosophical stance; (b) consistent with the academic level and nature of postsecondary education and (c) consistent with the Word of God.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The purpose statement is well written and appropriate to Christian postsecondary education; all faculty, administrators, board members and students have read and endorsed the statement; the statement is available in writing and appropriate printed publications such as the catalog, faculty and student handbooks, etc. The statement includes objectives that are measurable and achievable within the scope of the institution and consistent with Christian objectives and TRACS standards. The statement has been approved by the governing board as reflected in the minutes. There is a regular review of the purpose and objectives and systematic evaluation in terms of actual outcomes as reflected in the board minutes. The name, with reference to the program offered, is consistent with national norms in naming an educational institution. The institution has been utilizing assessment data for institutional planning, change, and development through an assessment office or person(s).

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The written purpose statement is satisfactory and appropriate to Christian postsecondary education; the majority of the faculty, administrators, board members and students have read the statement; the statement is available in a few appropriated printed publications. The statement includes some objectives that are measurable and somewhat achievable within the scope of the institution and consistent with Christian objectives and TRACS standards. The statement has been approved by the governing board as reflected in the minutes. There is a periodic review of the purpose and objectives and systematic evaluation in terms of actual outcomes as reflected in recent board minutes. The name, with reference to the programs offered, is consistent with national norms in naming an educational institution. The institution is receiving data for feedback and input and the assessment office or person(s) is preparing to classify and organize the data.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The purpose statement is available but it is not well written or clearly appropriate to Christian postsecondary education; the faculty, administrators, board members have not read the statement; the statement is not available in appropriate printed publications. The statement does not include objectives that are measurable and achievable within the scope of the institution and consistent with Christian objectives and TRACS standards. The statement has been approved by the governing board as reflected in the minutes. There is a cursory review of the purpose and objectives and systematic evaluation in terms

of actual outcomes as reflected in recent board minutes. The name, with reference to the programs offered, is not consistent with national norms in naming an educational institution. The institution has implemented its assessment plan, but no data is as yet being produced. An assessment office or person(s) is being planned.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The incomplete and piece-meal written purpose statement is available but it is not appropriate to Christian postsecondary education; the faculty, administrators, board members and students have not read the statement; the statement is not available in appropriate printed publications. The statement does not include objectives that are measurable and achievable within the scope of the institution and consistent with Christian objectives and TRACS standards. The statement has not been approved by the governing board. There is no review of the purpose and objectives and systematic evaluation in terms of actual outcomes. The name, with reference to the programs offered, is inappropriate and not consistent with national norms in naming an educational institution. The institution has not initiated an assessment plan and has not delegated assessment responsibilities.

C. Philosophy of Education

Basically, a philosophy is defined as a set of beliefs which one holds about education which is followed in both course development and in the teaching-learning process. A Christian philosophy holds that the foundation of all knowledge is God's truth and must be Christ-centered. This Bible-based thread should be pervasive throughout the educational program.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The Christian philosophy of education is well written, comprehensive, board approved and is regularly assessed. The statement is available in appropriate documents such as catalog, handbooks, etc.; and is understood by faculty and students.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The Christian philosophy of education is board approved, periodically assessed, and reflected in the in the curriculum and operations of the institution. It is available in written form in appropriate documents.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The Christian philosophy of education is poorly written or not approved by the board, or is not assessed or is not reflected in the curriculum and operations of the institution or is not appropriately published.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

There is no written Christian philosophy of education.

D. Ethical Values and Standards

Standards of behavior must be established and maintained by the institution which are consistent with moral and spiritual standards of biblical Christianity as set forth in the Scriptures. The institution's standards of conduct should enhance biblical moral values and personal discipline resulting in a lifestyle which respects the rights of others, provides caring service and outreach to the disadvantaged and exemplifies a life of integrity and Christian values.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has a clearly written and comprehensive ethical values and standards statement. The statement has been approved by the governing board and appears in all official publications and documents; faculty and students have indicated their intent to adhere to the ethical values statement; and, the statement is consistent with the biblically-based Christian Standards for morality and ethics with appropriate Scripture verses. Accreditation status is accurately presented in all publications and communications including the website.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has a satisfactory biblical ethical values and standards statement that is available in written form. The statement has been approved by the governing board. The code of conduct appears in most official publications and documents; faculty and students have indicated their intent to adhere to the ethical values and standards statement and ethics. Accreditation status is accurately presented in all publications and communications including the website.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution has a poorly written ethical values and standards statement. The statement has not been approved by the governing board or does not appear in any official publications and documents; faculty and students are not aware of the ethical values and standards statement.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution does not have a written ethical values and standards statement.

II. OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

This section describes those functions related to the operation and the educational outcomes of the institution.

A. Operational Authority

Institution has the legal authority to operate an institution of Higher Education.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has legal authorization to operate, complies with all Federal and State regulations where it is located, for both on-campus and distance education programs, and is proactive in educational leadership within their educational community. Those institutions located outside the United States have the authorization to operate and to grant degrees from the government of the country in which it is located.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has legal authorization to operate, complies with all Federal and State regulations where it is located, for both on-campus and distance education programs. Those institutions located outside the United States have the authorization to operate and to grant degrees from the government of the country in which it is located.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution's legal authority to operate is unclear or in jeopardy, or the institution has periodically failed to comply with Federal or State regulations where it is located, for either on-campus or distance education programs. The legal authority to operate or to grant degrees for those institutions located outside the United States is unclear or in jeopardy.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution has no legal authorization to operate, fails to comply with Federal or State regulations where it is located, for both on-campus and distance education programs. Those institutions located outside the United States have no authorization to operate or to grant degrees from the government of the country in which it is located.

B. Organizational Structure

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate research and creative activity. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component. The institution has sufficient independence from any external entity, such that it is solely accountable for meeting the TRACS Standards.

1. The Board

The board is a legally constituted body responsible for establishing broad policy, appointing and evaluating the chief executive officer, establishing and maintaining financial stability and overseeing the effective pursuit of the stated purposes and objectives of the institution.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

There is a good and effective representative governing board of at least five voting members legally established and effectively functioning. The board is consistently involved in formulating and maintaining a long range plan and goals of the institution; approving the institutional purpose, objectives, and philosophy and reviewing these regularly to ensure that they are being pursued faithfully, approving all substantive changes in the institution's purposes, policies, and programs -- prior to implementation; functioning within the parameters established in a constitution and bylaws; approving the annual budget and all capital expenditures; establishing policies; meeting regularly, evaluating the effectiveness of its own functions for the purpose of implementing change, and maintaining accurate and consistent minutes of all board meetings. The institution has a board handbook and functions within its parameters much of the time.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

There is a representative governing board legally of at least five voting members established and satisfactorily functioning. The board is usually involved in formulating and maintaining a long range plan and goals of the institution; approving institutional purpose, objectives, and philosophy and usually reviews these to ensure that they are being faithfully pursued; approving most substantive changes in the institution's purposes, policies, and programs -- usually prior to implementation; functioning within the parameters established in a written manual or handbook; approving the annual budget and capital expenditures; establishing policies; meeting, evaluating the effectiveness of its own functions, and maintaining accurate and consistent minutes of all board meetings. The board has put in writing its duties and responsibilities.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The legal authority of the governing board is uncertain. The board is not regularly involved in formulating and maintaining a long range plan and goals of the institution; approving the institutional purpose, objectives, and philosophy; reviewing these to ensure that they

are being pursued; approving substantive changes in the institution's purposes, policies, and programs -- usually prior to implementation, or evaluating the effectiveness of its own functions. The board does not have a formal written constitution and/or by-laws, manual, or handbook that clearly outlines the functions, responsibilities and duties of the board. The board has not been involved in approving the annual budget and/or capital expenditures and establishing policies. The board does not meet regularly and/or has failed to maintain accurate and consistent minutes of all board meetings.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The governing board is not legally established and functioning or has less than five voting members. The board is not assuming its responsibilities.

2. The Administration

There must be in place an administration/leadership team adequate in number, appropriate by title and function and appropriately degreed and competent to administer the institution effectively and efficiently. Administrators must possess credentials, experience, and demonstrated competence appropriate to their areas of responsibilities. The administrative organization must reflect the purpose and philosophy of the institution, and establish a process by which the administrative team convenes regularly for the purpose of planning, deliberation, and communication.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution exhibits a strong leadership team headed by full-time properly qualified CEO and CAO. Lines of authority are well defined. Interviews with representative members from within the institution verify that the written policies and procedures are consistently followed and respected. The written records, including the CEO's reports to the board, accurately reflect what the CEO has achieved. Written administrative job descriptions are available and are used for the annual evaluation.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution exhibits an able leadership team headed by full-time, properly qualified CEO and CAO. Written administrative job descriptions are available and are used for the annual evaluation.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution exhibits a weak leadership team, or is not headed by a full-time properly qualified CEO and/or CAO. Lines of authority are not well defined. Interviews with representative members from within the institution verify that the written policies and procedures are not consistently followed. Written administrative job descriptions are not available and/or used for the key administrative positions. Administrators are not fully aware of their job responsibilities and duties.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution fails to exhibit an adequate leadership team. The president does not command respect. Interviews with representative members from within the institution verify that the written policies and procedures are seldom followed. No job descriptions are available for any of the administrative positions. The administrators do not have appropriate academic degrees and lack experience in their assigned areas.

3. The Support Staff

The support staff members are an integral part of the institution. They provide important service functions for both the administrative and academic entities of the institution. Policies and procedures are to be developed, codified, and disseminated which will provide the needed guidelines for the support staff, including job descriptions for each position.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

There is a strong support staff sufficient in number and competence to support the administrative, academic, and support functions of the institution. The support staff effectively and consistently provides services to students, faculty, and administrators. Interviews with members of the institution indicate that a highly respected and qualified support staff is in place, functioning effectively and efficiently.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

There is an adequate support staff sufficient in number and competence to support the administrative, academic, and support functions of the institution.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The support staff is inadequate to support the administration and academic functions of the institution. The support staff is not providing the basic services to students, faculty, and/or administrators.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The support staff not in place is poor or insufficient in number and competence to support adequately the administrative and academic functions of the institution.

C. Publications and Policies

1. Publications

Among the official publications that are required of a postsecondary institution are the following: faculty handbook, student handbook, catalog(s), policies manual, governing board manual, and recruiting or promotional material.

Policies are developed and implemented to evaluate and revise all publications regularly in order to maintain current and accurate information. The institution will portray its programs, services, and activities in all publications, advertisements, and all other communications accurately and clearly. All statements made are supported by documented evidence, unambiguous, and not misleading. All publications, including those on any web sites, are to be consistent.

The publications are reviewed by appropriate administrative personnel and approved by the governing board. (Also see the section entitled "Principles of Good Practice in Institutional Advertising, Student Recruiting, and Representation of Accredited Status" in the TRACS *Policies Manual*.)

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution's publications are excellent, consistent with the mission and objectives, are regularly and consistently reviewed, and approved by the board annually. They are well written, readily available to all appropriate constituents in all available formats, and are current, clear, factually accurate, and consistent with each other. All publications are high quality and accurately reflect the institution's accreditation status with TRACS, are given full distribution to all required individuals, and contain all appropriate board approved policies. The institution's publications exceed the TRACS requirements and meet the appropriate standards.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution's publications are consistent with the mission and objectives and are approved by the board on a regular basis. They are readily available to its constituents in all appropriate formats, and are current, clear, factually accurate, and consistent with each other in all formats. The appropriate publications accurately reflect the institution's accreditation status with TRACS, are given wide distribution to all required individuals, and contain the appropriate board approved policies. The institution has all the required publications which meet the appropriate standards.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution's publications are not always consistent with the mission and objectives and are not approved by the board on a regular basis. They are inconsistently available to its constituents and/or vary from one format to another. Publications may not be current, clear, factually accurate, and/or consistent with each other in all formats. The appropriate publications inconsistently reflect the institution's accreditation status with TRACS, are given varying distribution to required individuals, and may or may not contain the

appropriate board approved policies. The institution may not have all the required publications which meet the appropriate standards.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution's publications are not consistent with the mission and objectives and are not approved by the board. They are not available to its constituents. Publications are not current, clear, factually accurate, and/or consistent with each other in all formats. Publications do not accurately reflect the institution's accreditation status with TRACS, and/or are not distributed to the required individuals, and do not contain the appropriate board approved policies. The institution does not have all the required publications.

2. Policies

Policies are to be developed, appropriately approved, codified and disseminated for administrative operations, financial practices, academic procedures, and student development. They are consistent with the institution's purpose and administratively feasible.

The specific procedures for the development of institutional policies are in appropriate publications such as: staff manual, faculty handbook, student handbook, catalog, and governing board handbook. The date each policy is approved by the board is provided in the policy manual and, as appropriate, other publications. These dates correspond with the appropriate minutes of the approving body.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

Policies and Procedures are well written, comprehensive in scope, consistent with the institutional mission, Biblical Foundation Statement, institutional objectives, and Christian philosophy of education, and are organized in a *Policies Manual*. The institution's website and numerous quality publications are provided to ensure full dissemination of policies to all intended users. The Board approves the mission (purpose), philosophy of education, institutional objectives, biblical foundation statements, and all institutional policies. The institution annual assesses the Biblical Foundations Statement and Board minutes include the date of approval of all policies. The institution consistently implements and fully follows all board approved policies.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

Policies and Procedures are comprehensive in scope, consistent with the institutional mission, Biblical Foundation Statement, institutional objectives, and Christian philosophy of education; and to ensure the widest dissemination to the intended users, are published in the appropriate publication(s) and on the website. The Board approves the mission (purpose), philosophy of education, institutional objectives, biblical foundation statements, and all institutional policies. The institution annually assesses the Biblical Foundations Statement and Board minutes include the date of approval of all policies. The institution fully implements and follows all board approved policies.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

Policies and Procedures are limited in scope, and/or inconsistent with the institutional mission, Biblical Foundation Statement, institutional objectives, or Christian philosophy of education; and may not ensure dissemination to the intended users. Policies may not be published in the appropriate publication(s) and/or on the website. The Board sporadically approves the mission (purpose), philosophy of education, institutional objectives, biblical foundation statements, and/or institutional policies. The institution may not assess the Biblical Foundations Statement annually and/or Board minutes may not include the date of approval of all policies. The institution only partially implements and follows board approved policies.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

Policies and Procedures are limited in scope, and/or are not consistent with the institutional mission, Biblical Foundation Statement, institutional objectives, or Christian philosophy of education. Policies are not disseminated to the intended users and/or are not published in the appropriate publication(s) and/or on the website. The Board has not approved the mission (purpose), philosophy of education, institutional objectives, biblical foundation statements, and/or institutional policies on a regular basis. The institution does not assess the Biblical Foundations Statement annually and/or Board minutes do not include the date of approval of policies. The institution does not implement and/or follow its board approved policies.

D. Educational Program

1. Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

The educational environment of the institution is important and is conducive to and supportive of academic study. Educational support is in evidence including adequate facilities, learning materials, and supportive services, and academic counseling. The institution is able to support the educational programs offered by adequate student enrollment and financial educational resources. A curriculum process is evidenced.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The curriculum for both undergraduate and graduate programs consistently reflect the mission, objectives and the philosophy of Christian education of the institution, reviewed annually and is adequately supported by the institution. All curriculum is exemplary and appropriate for the respective levels. Graduate programs are at a post-baccalaureate level that extends the intellectual maturity of students, are appropriate to the discipline, and include innovative summative experience(s). The educational environment encourages learning and the facilities, learning materials, faculty, and support services are superior. Faculty lead in the process of curriculum development, approval, review, modification, and assessment. Clearly defined student learning outcomes are established and reflected at the course, program, and institutional levels. Course and program objectives are well written in reference to measurable learning outcomes and are regularly assessed through student achievement and competency. Programs impart a well-defined common core of knowledge which enhances students educationally and/or vocationally, consistent with national norms, and are appropriate for educational level.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The curriculum clearly relates to the mission, objectives and the philosophy of Christian education of the institution and is reviewed annually and is adequately supported by the institution. The curriculum for undergraduate and graduate programs are appropriate for their respective levels. Graduate programs are at a post-baccalaureate level that extends the intellectual maturity of students, are appropriate to the discipline, and include summative experience(s). The educational environment is conducive to learning and consists of adequate facilities, learning materials, faculty, and support services. Educational quality is deemed average. A process which includes faculty is established for curriculum development, approval, review, modification, and assessment of the educational programs. Clearly defined student learning outcomes are established and reflected at the course, program, and institutional levels. Course and program objectives are written in reference to measurable learning outcomes and are assessed through student achievement and competency. Programs impart a common core of knowledge which enhances student educationally and/or vocationally, consistent with national norms, and are appropriate for educational level. Academic progress reports are provided to students in a timely manner.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The curriculum may not relate to the mission, objectives and the philosophy of Christian education of the institution and/or may not be reviewed annually. The curriculum is

disproportionately supported by the institution and the undergraduate and graduate programs may be inappropriate for their respective levels. Graduate programs are not always at a post-baccalaureate level, may not extend the intellectual maturity of students, may not be appropriate to the discipline, and/or may not include summative experience(s). Educational environments may not be conducive to learning or may have inadequate facilities, learning materials, faculty, and/or support services. Educational quality is deemed to be below average. Faculty may not be involved in curriculum development, and/or the approval, review, modification, or assessment of the educational programs. Student learning outcomes may not be established, clearly defined, and/or reflected at the course, program, and/or institutional levels. Course and program objectives are poorly written in reference to measurable learning outcomes and are inconsistently assessed. Programs may not impart a common core of knowledge or enhance the student educationally and/or vocationally. Programs may be inconsistent with national norms, and may be inappropriate for educational level. Academic progress reports may not be provided to students in a timely manner.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The curriculum does not relate to the mission, objectives and the philosophy of Christian education of the institution and/or is not reviewed annually. The curriculum is inadequately supported by the institution and the undergraduate and graduate programs may be inappropriate for their respective levels. Graduate programs are not at a post-baccalaureate level, do not extend the intellectual maturity of students, are not appropriate to the discipline, and/or do not include summative experience(s). Educational environments are not conducive to learning and/or do not have inadequate facilities, learning materials, faculty, and/or support services. Educational quality is deemed to be inappropriate for an institution of higher learning. Faculty is not involved in curriculum development, and/or the approval, review, modification, or assessment of the educational programs. Student learning outcomes are not established, clearly defined, and/or reflected at the course, program, and/or institutional levels. Course and program objectives are not written in reference to measurable learning outcomes and/or are not assessed. Programs do not impart a common core of knowledge nor do they enhance the student educationally and/or vocationally. Programs are inconsistent with national norms, and/or are inappropriate for educational level. Academic progress reports are not provided to students in a timely manner.

2. Alternate Delivery Methods

Institutions that make extensive use of distance learning modes of education will present evidence that these are appropriate to higher education, consistent with institutional objectives, and effective (though alternative) means for achieving the intent of the TRACS standards. The institution will demonstrate that students completing these programs have the opportunity to acquire the same levels of knowledge and competencies as those students completing its regular on-campus programs. Therefore, it is essential that there be regular, systematic evaluation of all distance learning education to assess the appropriateness to the purpose of the institution. It is expected that these programs maintain the academic integrity of the institution.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

Programs and courses have the appropriate State, Federal, and/or national approvals. Actual content and quality, academic rigor, and learning outcomes of courses are comparable to that which would be expected from the corresponding residential course, although the actual format and assessment methods may vary. Learning experiences within each course are equal in scope and rigor to national norms. Sufficient number of qualified, and appropriately faculty are involved in the evaluation and oversight of programs. Programs are routinely and systematically evaluated. The institution verifies the identity of students enrolled in all courses offered through alternative delivery methods and protects the privacy of students. Assessment methods assure that courses and programs offered through alternative delivery methods are comparable to campus based programs. Learning resources to support alternative delivery courses and programs are both available and accessible to students enrolled in such programs.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

Programs and courses have the appropriate State, Federal, and/or national approvals. Actual content and quality, academic rigor, and learning outcomes of courses are comparable to that which would be expected from the corresponding residential course, although the actual format and assessment methods may vary. Learning experiences within each course are equal in scope and rigor to national norms. Sufficient number of qualified, and appropriately faculty are involved in the evaluation and oversight of programs. Programs are routinely and systematically evaluated. The institution verifies the identity of students enrolled in all courses offered through alternative delivery methods and protects the privacy of students. Assessment methods assure that courses and programs offered through alternative delivery methods are comparable to campus based programs. Learning resources to support alternative delivery courses and programs are both available and accessible to students enrolled in such programs.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

Programs and courses may not have the appropriate State, Federal, and/or national approvals. Actual content and quality, academic rigor, and learning outcomes of courses are inconsistently comparable to that which would be expected from the corresponding residential course. Learning experiences within each course are not always equal in scope and rigor to national norms. Faculty may not be appropriately involved in the evaluation and oversight of programs. Programs may not be routinely and systematically evaluated.

The institution inadequately verifies that the student enrolled in courses offered through alternative delivery methods is the actual student identified. The institution's protection of student privacy is inconsistent. Assessment methods may not assure that courses and programs offered through alternative delivery methods are comparable to campus based programs. Learning resources to support alternative delivery courses and programs may not be either available or accessible to students enrolled in such programs.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

Programs and courses do not have the appropriate State, Federal, and/or national approvals. Actual content and quality, academic rigor, and learning outcomes of courses are not comparable to that which would be expected from the corresponding residential course. Learning experiences within each course are not equal in scope and rigor to national norms. Faculty are not appropriately involved in the evaluation and oversight of programs. Programs are not routinely and systematically evaluated. The institution does not verify that the student enrolled in courses offered through alternative delivery methods is the actual student identified. The institution fails to provide protection of student privacy. Assessment methods do not assure that courses and programs offered through alternative delivery methods are comparable to campus based programs. Learning resources to support alternative delivery courses and programs are not available and/or accessible to students enrolled in such programs.

3. Branch Campuses

A branch campus is an additional location geographically apart from an institution's main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program.

Control of the branch campus, including its educational program policies, administrative and business policies, is vested in the home entity. The branch campus provides all the necessary academic support services and systems for its students.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has legal authorization to operate the branch campus from the State or foreign nation in which it operates. The branch campus operates under the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Required administrative team and faculty are in place at the branch campus. The branch has a separate catalog and all student records are maintained at both the main campus and the branch campus. All written policies and procedures, including a business and assessment plan, academic and admission requirements, are equal as appropriate to the home campus and presented in all appropriate publications. Any policy specific to the branch campus is approved by the board and included in the institution's *Policy Manual*. Policies indicate that quality will be equal to the on-campus programs. Policies indicate that quality will be equal to the on-campus programs, as evidenced by an adequate assessment mechanism. Facilities, and learning resources adequately support the programs offered.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has legal authorization to operate the branch campus from the State or foreign nation in which it operates. The branch campus operates under the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Required administrative team and faculty are in place at the branch campus. The branch has a separate catalog and all student records are maintained at both the main campus and the branch campus. All written policies and procedures, including a business and assessment plan, academic and admission requirements, are equal as appropriate to the home campus and presented in all appropriate publications. Any policy specific to the branch campus is approved by the board and included in the institution's *Policy Manual*. Policies indicate that quality will be equal to the on-campus programs. Facilities, and learning resources adequately support the programs offered.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The legal authorization to operate the branch campus from the State or foreign nation in which it operates has expired. Only a portion of the operations of the branch campus operate under the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Required administrative team and faculty are in transition at the branch campus. The branch has a no separate catalog and all student records are maintained at only the main campus or the branch campus. Some written policies and procedures are in place, including a business and assessment plan, academic and admission requirements, are not equal as appropriate to the home campus and/or presented in all appropriate publications. Not all policies specific to the branch campus are approved by the board and/or included in the institution's *Policy Manual*. Policies indicate that quality may not always be equal to the

on-campus programs. Facilities and learning resources are marginally adequate to support the programs offered.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution has no legal authorization to operate the branch campus from the State or foreign nation in which it operates. The operations of the branch campus are separate from the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Administrative team and faculty are not in place at the branch campus. The branch has a no separate catalog and student records are not maintained at either the main campus or the branch campus. Written policies and procedures are not in place; and/or a business, assessment plan, academic requirements, and/or admission requirements are not equal as appropriate to the home campus and/or presented in appropriate publications. Policies are not specific to the branch campus, are not approved by the board, and/or included in the institution's *Policy Manual*. Policies indicate that quality is not equal to the on-campus programs. Facilities, and learning resources are not adequate to support the programs offered.

4. Teaching Sites

A Teaching Site is an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers less than 50% of any educational program.

Appropriate student services are offered at the teaching site and all student records are kept at the main campus. The teaching site is geographically and physically located away from the home campus with facilities to support the courses offered and students served. The institution exercises control over the educational programs and faculty at the teaching site.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has legal authorization to operate the branch campus from the State or foreign nation in which it operates which is renewed regularly and ahead of expiration. The branch campus operates under the authority and control of the institution's governing board. The administrative team and faculty are in place at the branch campus and exceed the required number and qualifications standards. The branch has a full and separate catalog and all student records are maintained at both the main campus and the branch campus. All written policies and procedures, including a business and assessment plan, academic and admission requirements, are equal as appropriate to the home campus and presented in all appropriate publications. Any policy specific to the branch campus is approved by the board and included in the institution's *Policy Manual*. Policies indicate that quality will be equal to the on-campus programs. Policies indicate that quality will be equal to the on-campus programs, as evidenced by an adequate assessment mechanism. Facilities, and learning resources adequately support the programs offered.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has legal authorization to operate the teaching site from the State or foreign nation in which it operates. The teaching site operates under the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Appropriate faculty are in place at the teaching site. Students earn less than 50% of any educational program offered and institution provided notification of maximum academic credit which can be earned at the teaching site and the options for earning the credits for completing the program. Facilities, and learning resources adequately support the courses offered.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The legal authorization to operate the teaching sites from the State or foreign nation in which it operates has expired. Only a portion of the operations of the teaching site operate under the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Required faculty are in transition at the teaching site. More than 50% of some educational programs are offered and/or the institution provided inadequate notification of maximum academic credit which can be earned at the teaching site. The options for earning the credits for completing the program are unclear. Facilities and learning resources are marginally adequate to support the courses offered.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution has no legal authorization to operate the teaching sites from the State or foreign nation in which it operates have not renewed the authorizations. The operations of the teaching site operate independently of the authority and control of the institution's governing board. Institution does not have the required faculty at the teaching site. More than 50% of all educational programs are offered and/or the institution provided no notification of maximum academic credit which can be earned at the teaching site. The institution has not identified the options for earning the credits for completing the program. Facilities and learning resources are not adequate to support the courses offered.

E. Faculty

Postsecondary institutions that become affiliated with TRACS will employ dedicated and qualified faculty who possess high academic and professional qualities, are spiritually mature, and serve as personal and professional Christian role models.

Specifically, the fundamental contribution of the faculty is to provide effective instruction and advice and to do so in a manner that makes the curriculum vital, with reference to the purpose, objectives and philosophy of the institution. The institution employs faculty with academic credentials appropriate to their teaching and research and who support the purpose of the institution in their activities. The institution has a written rationale for the number of faculty and academic support staff it employs. The rationale references the size and levels of its approved educational programs.

A major function of the faculty is to advise the administration and board in the formulation of educational and academic policies involving such matters as curriculum, admissions, academic standards, advising, graduation, student life, and faculty growth and welfare.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution exceeds the required number and percentage of qualified full-time and part-time faculty who support the mission of the institution, perform all required faculty responsibilities (including the development and review of curriculum), assure the quality and integrity of its academic programs, and fulfill their role in governance. The institution maintains detailed faculty documentation and provides faculty many opportunities for professional and spiritual development. Institution has an outstanding faculty organization, ensures academic freedom, and evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty with the results of the evaluations utilized for the improvement of individual faculty and the program and the program as a whole.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution exhibits an adequate number and appropriate percentage of qualified full-time and part-time faculty who support the mission of the institution, perform all required faculty responsibilities (including the development and review of curriculum), assure the quality and integrity of its academic programs, and fulfill their role in governance. The institution maintains appropriate faculty documentation and provides faculty opportunities for professional and spiritual development. Institution has a functioning faculty organizations, ensures academic freedom, and regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution exhibits an inadequate number and/or inappropriate percentage of qualified full-time and part-time faculty to support the mission of the institution, perform all required faculty responsibilities (including the development and review of curriculum), assure the quality and integrity of its academic programs, and fulfill their role in governance. The institution minimally maintains faculty documentation and provides faculty limited opportunities for professional and spiritual development. Institution has a

minimally functioning faculty organization, inconsistently ensures academic freedom, and/or irregularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution exhibits both an inadequate number and/or inappropriate percentage of qualified full-time and part-time faculty to support the mission of the institution, perform all required faculty responsibilities (including the development and review of curriculum), assure the quality and integrity of its academic programs, and fulfill their role in governance. The institution fails to maintain faculty documentation or provide faculty opportunities for professional and spiritual development. Institution has no functioning faculty organization, fails to ensure academic freedom, and/or evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member only periodically.

F. Student Services

1. Student Services Programs

Consistent with its mission, the institution provides an environment that fosters the spiritual, intellectual and personal development of its students. It recruits, admits, enrolls, and endeavors to ensure the success of its students; and offers the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has a highly qualified, experienced individual to oversee and more than adequate numbers of competent and highly qualified staff to provide an array of superior student services programs appropriate to its mission and objectives regardless of the delivery method of the instructional programs. Students indicate they are well informed regarding the student services offered. All student services are administered in accordance with a stated plan and information gathered from the assessments of the student services programs has been utilized for program improvement. The institution provides an orientation program which covers all of the major issues and information needed by students and maintains a highly effective and functioning program for providing students with opportunities for spiritual development and ministry service. Student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized, readily available, fairly and consistently administered, and records of complaints are kept for the appropriate period. Student records are permanently, securely, and confidentially maintained with appropriate backup files. Student academic and vocational advising is available as appropriate to the approved programs. Financial aid services, headed by a qualified individual, are available as appropriate. The institution provides superior facilities, computer services, and equipment for each student services support function.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has a qualified individual to oversee and adequate numbers of qualified staff to provide an array of student services programs appropriate to its mission and objectives regardless of the delivery method of instructional programs. Institution has an orientation program and provides opportunities for the spiritual development of students. Student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are clearly stated, well publicized, readily available, fairly and consistently administered, and records of complaints are kept for the appropriate period. Student records are permanently, securely, and confidentially maintained with appropriate backup files. Student academic and vocational advising is available as appropriate to the approved programs. Financial aid services, headed by a qualified individual, are available as appropriate. The institution provides adequate facilities, computer services, and equipment for each student services support function.

The institution provides appropriate facilities, computer services, and equipment for each student services support function. The intercollegiate sports program has a satisfactory plan, adequate functions and documentation (if offered).

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution has an unqualified individual to oversee and/or insufficient numbers of qualified staff to provide an array of student services programs. Programs are inappropriate to its mission and/or objectives, or not appropriate for the delivery methods of some instructional programs. Programs are viewed by students as only marginally beneficial. Institution has a minimal orientation program and/or provides minimal opportunities for the spiritual development of students. Student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are unclear and/or not publicized, not readily available, nor fairly and consistently administered. Records of complaints are not kept for the appropriate period. Student records are permanently kept, but the security, and confidentiality is in question. Student academic and vocational advising is minimally available or is inappropriate to the approved programs. Financial aid services are headed by an unqualified individual or are available as appropriate. The institution provides inappropriate or inadequate facilities, computer services, and/or equipment for each student services support function.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution has limited or no established student services programs and there is no evidence that such services will be provided in the near future. Programs are viewed by students as not being beneficial. The institution has no orientation program and/or provides no opportunities for the spiritual development of students. Student rights and responsibilities, including grievance procedures, are non-existent and/or unpublicized, unavailable, or unfairly and inconsistently administered. Records of complaints are not kept. Student records are not permanently kept and/or the security and confidentiality has proven to be inadequate. Student academic and vocational advising is not available or is inappropriate to the approved programs. Financial aid services are not headed by a qualified individual and/or are not available as appropriate. The institution provides totally inadequate facilities, computer services, and equipment for each student services support function.

2. Intercollegiate Sports

The institution has ultimate responsibility for and exercises appropriate academic, administrative, fiscal, and health/safety controls over its intercollegiate athletics program.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has high academic expectations for its student athletes and support services are in place to assure the success of student athletes in the same educational programs as all other students. Guidelines, services, and personnel are all in place to assure the health and academic welfare of student athletes.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution's academic expectations and educational programs are the same for its athletes as for all other students. Guidelines and arrangements are in place to assure the health and academic welfare of student athletes.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution's academic expectations and educational programs for its athletes fall below those for all other students. Only minimal guidelines and/or arrangements are in place to assure the health and academic welfare of student athletes.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution has no academic expectations for its athletes and/or educational program requirements are modified substantially for its athletes. Guidelines and/or arrangements are not in place to assure the health and academic welfare of student athletes.

G. Financial Operations

Financial stability and integrity are major factors in determining the viability of any institution of higher education. Its financial resources will be adequate to carry out its mission and support its programs and activities for the foreseeable future.

Institutions are to give evidence of financial stability and integrity with enough monetary support to assure the continuity of the essential operations beyond the date when current students would complete their degree programs.

All member institutions obtain a certified external audit of the financial statements annually, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and federal guidelines. Auditors will not be inappropriately involved with the institution (e.g., are not members of the governing board, not employees of the institution, not under contract to the institution for services other than the audit, or not involved in the decision-making activity, etc.).

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution consistently demonstrates that its financial resources are more than adequate to carry out its purpose and support its current programs now and in the future. This is evidenced in a balanced budget and a positive cash flow. The financial operation of the institution is highly organized and is well staffed by competent professionals. Sound business management is evidenced by community trust and very efficient student services. Accounts payable are current; income is in excess of expenditures for the past four years; budget allocations are sufficient for current operational expenses; a satisfactory contingency plan is in place for emergencies. A plan listing future projections of income and expenses is available and approved by the governing board. Financial Reports demonstrate good financial integrity with very few serious accounting errors. An external opinioned audit with management letter is completed each year on time. Institution always meets appropriate Title IV Requirements.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD

The institution demonstrates that its financial resources are adequate to carry out its purpose and to support its current programs now and in the future. This is evidenced in a balanced budget and a positive cash flow. The financial operation of the institution is well organized and is staffed by competent persons. Sound business management is evidenced by community trust and efficient student services. Accounts payable are current and income is at least equal to expenditures for the past three years. Budget allocations are sufficient for current operational expenses; a satisfactory contingency plan is in place for emergencies; a basic plan listing future projection of income and expenses is available and approved by the governing board. Budget allocations for programs are adequate. Financial reports demonstrate adequate financial integrity with few serious accounting errors. An external opinioned audit with management letter is completed each year on time. Institution always meets appropriate Title IV Requirements.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution demonstrates that some of the time that its financial resources are somewhat adequate to carry out its purpose and to support its current programs. There is evidence of an occasionally balanced budget and positive cash flow. The financial operation of the institution is somewhat organized and staffed by largely unqualified persons. Sound business management is largely not in evidence and there is a basic question of trust by the community. Student services are not efficient. The institution frequently submits financial reports with major errors, reports are seldom on time, and there is no acceptable check and balance system provided for auditing financial records. The institution refuses to fund an accounting system. An incomplete and superficial contingency plan is in place for emergencies. Budget allocations do not adequately support programs. Financial reports demonstrate some financial integrity with some serious accounting errors. An external opinioned audit with management letter is not completed on time each year. Institution occasionally fails to meet the appropriate Title IV Requirements.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution fails to demonstrate that its financial resources are adequate to carry out its purpose and to support its programs. There is no evidence of a balanced budget or positive cash flow. The financial operation of the institution is not organized and not adequately staffed by qualified persons. Sound business management is absent, and there is evidence of a lack of community trust and poor student services. Financial reports demonstrate no financial integrity with many serious accounting errors. An external opinioned audit with management letter is not completed on time each year. Institution consistently fails to meet appropriate Title IV Requirements.

H. Institutional Assessment

It is important to identify a planning process and assign planning responsibilities. Planning needs to be all-inclusive in nature; programs, enrollment, staffing projections (administrators, faculty, support, staff), finances (including budget summaries and estimated income and expenditures for each year in the long-range plan), facilities, equipment, policies, and procedures for operation and evaluation. Sources of revenue should be included, along with enrollment projections. Future projections should be developed on a sound historical base and any changes must be adequately justified by appropriate data. The underlying basis of a process for demonstrating institutional effectiveness is to provide hard data to demonstrate that the institution is accomplishing its mission.

The institutional assessment process should include continuous evaluation procedures of the entire institution--resources, finances, student development, faculty, and especially procedures which are outcome based to evaluate educational quality in such critical areas as curriculum, student learning and achievement, and instruction.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has written and implemented an outstanding *Assessment Plan* which includes all aspects of the institution. The *Assessment Plan* is institutionalized and the assessment data regularly used in revising its *Assessment Plan* and incorporated into the institutional short-term and long-term planning processes. The *Assessment Plan* is continuously reviewed with updates approved by the board, contains a process for the on-going evaluation of all policies; and provides a procedure for evaluating, revising and approving all institutional publications.

Administrative personnel have clear and definitive job descriptions and performance criteria are in place that are clearly tied to them. The institution conducts on-going evaluations of its employees against the responsibilities in the approved job description.

The institution provides a model process for the evaluation of whether the student learning and program outcomes are appropriate to its educational mission and the approach to understanding student learning focuses on the institutional, program and course levels. These processes include the thorough analysis of retention rates, completion rates, graduation rates, job placement rates, and student success rates on state and other licensing exams with utilization of multiple approaches (qualitative and quantitative methods and direct and indirect measures) for assessing information which is both internal and external to the institution. The results of the evaluation of student learning are provided to both internal and external stakeholders, readily available to the public in a clear format, and includes regular curriculum reviews which ensure the content is consistent with national norms. Assessment results are reviewed on an on-going basis with new goals regularly established which result in revisions made to the curriculum based on assessment results. An established process is provided for the continuous evaluation of the performance of all faculty which has shown to improve instructional delivery and faculty improvement.

The institution continuously evaluates its effectiveness in admitting and retaining students and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the student services programs to meet the

institutional mission. Information obtained through the evaluation is actively used to improve achievement of student services programs goals.

The institution systematically evaluates its fiscal condition and monitors the processes of its financial management of the fiscal operation including all internal and external mechanisms. The institution focuses on ensuring its financial stability and utilizes the results of financial evaluations for financial planning.

The institution continuously evaluates the adequacy of facilities and equipment (including technology) and of its library materials and learning resources.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has developed and implemented a comprehensive *Assessment Plan* which includes all aspects of the institution. The *Assessment Plan* is in writing, shared widely, and posted on the institution's website. Minutes of meetings indicate the institution is using the assessment data for revising its *Assessment Plan*. The *Assessment Plan* is annually reviewed and approved by the board; contains a process for the evaluation of all policies on a regular basis; and provides a procedure for evaluating, revising and approving all institutional publications.

Administrative personnel have job descriptions and performance criteria that are appropriate to the position and the institution conducts regular evaluations of its employees against the responsibilities in the approved job description.

The institution provides a systematic evaluation of whether the student learning and program outcomes are appropriate to its educational mission and the approach to understanding student learning focuses on the institutional, program and course levels and includes the analysis of retention rates, completion rates, graduation rates, job placement rates, and student success rates on state and other licensing exams; assessment of student learning outcomes at the institution, program and course levels; and utilization of multiple approaches (qualitative and quantitative methods and direct and indirect measures) for assessing student learning, including information both internal and external to the institution. The results of the evaluation of student learning are provided to stakeholders and made available to the public in an easy to understand format and regularly reviews curriculum are performed in order to ensure that the content is consistent with national norms. Assessment results are reviewed, analyzed and possible new goals are discussed to implement changes with revisions of the curriculum made based on assessment results. An established process is provided for the regular evaluation of all faculty performance with the goal of improving instructional delivery and leads to faculty improvement.

The institution regularly evaluates its effectiveness in admitting and retaining students and the appropriateness and effectiveness of its student services to meet the institutional mission. Information obtained through the evaluation is used to improve achievement of student services programs goals.

The institution systematically evaluates its fiscal condition and financial management of the financial operation including appropriate internal and external mechanisms which ensure financial stability and utilizes the results of these activities for financial planning.

The institution regularly evaluates the adequacy of facilities and equipment (including technology) and of its library materials and learning resources.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institutional *Assessment Plan* does not include all aspects of the institution and/or is not distributed or posted on the website. Minutes of meetings do not indicate the institution is using the assessment data for review, revision, or evaluation of policies and publications prior to approval by the governing board.

Administrative personnel have job descriptions, but performance criteria are unclear and evaluations are irregular.

The institution is inconsistent in the evaluation of whether the student learning and program outcomes are appropriate to its educational mission and the approach to understanding student learning focuses on the institutional, program and course levels and includes the analysis of retention rates, completion rates, graduation rates, job placement rates, and student success rates on state and other licensing exams; assessment of student learning outcomes at the institution, program and course levels; and utilization of multiple approaches (qualitative and quantitative methods and direct and indirect measures) for assessing student learning, including information both internal and external to the institution. The results of the evaluation of student learning are not readily apparent or easy to understand. Reviews of curriculum and use of assessment results are not clearly documented. Faculty performance evaluations are not consistent.

The institutional evaluation of its effectiveness in admitting and retaining students and the appropriateness and effectiveness of its student services appears to be informal.

The institution's fiscal condition is in decline without realistic plans to improve financial management, budgeting, and fund raising in order to return the institution to financial stability.

The institution does not demonstrate the adequacy of facilities, equipment (including technology), and/or of its library materials and learning resources.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution does not have a written Assessment Plan. Administrative personnel and faculty do not have job descriptions.

The student learning and program outcomes are assumed to be appropriate to its educational mission and the approach without supporting data. The institution has no plans on how to admit and retain students or the effectiveness of student services.

The institution's fiscal condition is in jeopardy without plans to improve financial management, budgeting, and/or fund raising.

The institution does not possess adequate facilities, equipment (including technology), library materials, or learning resources.

I. Institutional Research and Planning

The institution conducts sustained, evidence-based, and participatory discussions regarding how to effectively accomplish its mission and educational objectives. These activities form the foundation for both institutional planning and the systematic evaluation of institutional effectiveness. The results of this institutional inquiry, research, and data collection are used to establish priorities at all levels of the institution and to direct the short-term and long-term planning processes.

The institution's planning process is all-inclusive in nature and leads to the development of a comprehensive institutional *Strategic Plan*. Such a plan will normally address educational programs, student enrollment, staffing projections, finances, facilities, equipment, policies and procedures for operation.

The strategic planning process includes both short-range (1-2 years) and long-range (3-5 years) projections and goal setting. The process normally identifies priorities, sets goals and timelines, and identifies individuals responsible for implementation.

The institution utilizes the results of assessments in a broad-based continuous planning and evaluation process, and incorporates them into the strategic planning process.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The Institution has developed and implemented an outstanding *Strategic Plan* based on both internal and external factors. The persons responsible for implementation of goals and timetables have demonstrated effectiveness in completing action steps and meeting targets set for the accomplishment of goals. The financial resources required for meeting the goals have been provided and in some cases goals have been accomplished ahead of the timetable. The *Strategic Plan* is approved and reviewed annually by the board. It includes a facilities plan for maintaining and upgrading facilities. Goals are listed in priority order for each area of the institution (such as academic, student services, financial operations, administrative, etc.).

The planning process takes into account both income and expenditure categories for at least five years based upon sound research, an analysis of assessment data, and involves all appropriate constituencies of the institution. Detailed minutes of any committee meetings related to strategic planning are maintained.

The *Strategic Plan* is an integral part of the institution's on-going cycle of planning, budgeting, and assessment. The college makes excellent use of assessment data and subsequent revisions with adjusted or new goals are utilized to implement changes.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The Institution has developed and implemented a comprehensive *Strategic Plan* based on both internal and external factors. The *Strategic Plan* is in writing and includes timetables, persons responsible for implementation and the financial resources required for meeting the goals. The *Strategic Plan* is approved and reviewed annually by the board. It includes a facilities plan for maintaining and upgrading facilities. Goals are listed in

priority order for each area of the institution (such as academic, student services, financial operations, administrative, etc.).

The planning process takes into account both income and expenditure categories for at least five years. The *Strategic Plan* has been developed on sound research, based on an analysis of assessment data, and involves all appropriate constituencies of the institution. Minutes of any committee meetings related to strategic planning are maintained.

The *Strategic Plan* is an integral part of the institution's on-going cycle of planning, budgeting, and assessment. Assessment data and subsequent revisions with adjusted or new goals are utilized to implement changes.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

Evidence of the implementation of the *Strategic Plan* is lacking. The institution has a written *Strategic Plan*, but the timetables, persons responsible for implementation and/or the financial resources required for meeting the goals are missing or incomplete. The *Strategic Plan* is approved by the board, but the review cycle is irregular. The plan for maintaining and upgrading facilities is inadequate. Goals are not prioritized for each area of the.

The planning process does not include both income and expenditure categories for at least five years. The research and analysis of assessment data is not evident, nor does it involve all appropriate constituencies of the institution. Minutes of planning committee meetings are incomplete.

The utilization of the *Strategic Plan* in the institution's on-going cycle of planning, budgeting, and assessment is not evident as a basis of change and self-improvement for the Institution.

1. FAILS THE STANDARD:

The institution has no *Strategic Plan* or the plan is not adequate, does not provide for at least five years of income, and/or expenditures. The maintenance of facilities, personnel required for implementation of plans and goals, or other significant areas of institution are not addressed. The process for the development of a *Strategic Plan* does not include all the constituents. Minutes were not provided or were nonexistent.

The institution does not utilize a *Strategic Plan* in the institution's on-going cycle of planning, budgeting, and assessment is not evident as a basis of change and self-improvement for the Institution.

J. Library and Learning Resources

Libraries and learning resources are central to the educational process in institutions of higher learning. Convenience to users is a primary concern. Facilities, equipment, supplies and services adequately support the mission of the institution, the academic programs, and encourage faculty members and students to develop spiritually, intellectually, and culturally.

TRACS member schools vary in the number of students, programs and degree levels and these variations are directly reflected in the needs of the library and learning resources for each member institution. Member institutions are to include appropriate technology as a part of their libraries and learning resources.

Adequate resources for accreditation purposes are those owned by the institution and supplemented by those available to faculty and students by contracts with third parties. Institutions document that the resources are utilized.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution provides superior information resources, technology and services. State-of-the-art instructional technology is available to fully support its mission, academic programs, and administrative functions. Sound strategic, operational, and financial planning is in place and utilized for the improvement of library/LRC services. The institution provides abundant and consistent financial support for the library/LRC and utilizes exceptional instructional technology applications to achieve its academic mission regardless of the modes of delivery of its academic programs. The institution employs an abundant number of highly qualified library/LRC staff and provides outstanding training and support to faculty, staff, and students. The institution maintains continuous access and availability to library/LRC resources for all students, regardless of program location or mode of delivery.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution provides information resources, technology and services; and instructional technology appropriate to support its mission, academic programs, and administrative functions through strategic, operational, and financial planning. The institution provides sufficient and consistent financial support for library/LRC and utilizes instructional technology appropriate to its academic mission regardless of the modes of delivery of its academic programs. The institution employs an adequate number of professionally qualified library/LRC staff and provides appropriate training and support to faculty, staff, and students. The institution ensures appropriate access and availability to library/LRC resources for all students, regardless of program location or mode of delivery.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution provides minimal information resources, technology and services; and instructional technology in support of its mission, academic programs, and administrative functions. The institution has insufficient and inconsistent financial support for library/LRC services and utilizes instructional technology which is not appropriate to its academic mission and/or the modes of delivery of its academic programs. The institution employs

an inadequate number of professionally qualified library/LRC staff and/or provides insufficient training and support to faculty, staff, and students. The institution provides minimal access and availability to library/LRC resources for students

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution provides no information resources, technology and services. Instructional technology in support of its mission, academic programs, and administrative functions is minimal. The institution has minimal financial support for library/LRC services and fails to utilize instructional technology which is appropriate to its academic mission and/or the modes of delivery of its academic programs. The institution fails to employ any professionally qualified library/LRC staff and/or to provide training and support to faculty, staff, and students. The institution provides insufficient access and availability to library/LRC resources for students

K. Facilities and Equipment

Physical facilities are adequate to serve the institutional purpose and programs, meet all state and local requirements, and provide an atmosphere for safe and effective learning.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution provides and maintains superior facilities and state-of-the-art equipment which surpass the usual needs of comparable educational programs and other mission related activities. The institution controls the use of its facilities and has realistic plans in place and funds available to meet the facility needs into the future.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution provides and maintains adequate and appropriate facilities and equipment to serve the needs of the educational programs and other mission related activities. The institution controls the use of its facilities.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution provides inadequate and/or inappropriate facilities and equipment to serve the needs of the educational programs and other mission related activities. The maintenance of facilities and/or equipment is subpar. The institution only partially controls the use of its facilities.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution does not provide facilities and equipment which serves the needs of the educational programs and other mission related activities. The maintenance of facilities and/or equipment is nonexistent. The institution does not control the use of its facilities.

L. Health and Security

The institution is responsible for taking reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

4. EXCEEDS THE STANDARD:

The institution has an exceptionally detailed emergency plan which is appropriately posted and published. Extensive security measures are in place for all campus facilities and events. A superior medical care program is in place and an extensive referral network is provided for students. All procedures for handling hazardous material or dangerous equipment exceed local, State, and Federal laws.

3. MEETS THE STANDARD:

The institution has an appropriately posted and published emergency plan. Security measures are appropriate for all campus facilities. Appropriate medical care (or referral) is provided for students. All procedures for handling hazardous material or dangerous equipment conform to local, State, and Federal laws.

2. FALLS BELOW THE STANDARD:

The institution has an inadequate emergency plan and/or its plan is not posted and published as necessary. Security measures are inadequate for campus facilities. Appropriate medical care (or referral) is insufficient for the needs of its students. Procedures for handling hazardous material or dangerous equipment do not consistently conform to local, State, and Federal laws.

1. FAILS TO MEET THE STANDARD:

The institution does not have an emergency plan and/or its plan is not posted and published. The institution lacks security measures for campus facilities. Medical care and/or referral services are not provided. Procedures for handling hazardous material or dangerous equipment do not conform to local, State, and Federal laws.