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Introduction

Naropa Institute has a long growing process. Maybe one hundred years, and we’re not in a special rush. It’s a long-term project and I don’t expect to see the beginning of the end of it. But hopefully education could become a situation of practice and personal development, so education could be a powerful one, a tough one that imposes discipline on the student. And hopefully we could develop a greater contribution to not only America alone, but the greater universe.

—Chögyam Trungpa, Naropa University Founder

History of Naropa University

Naropa University was founded in 1974 by Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist meditation master, scholar, and artist now recognized as one of the foremost teachers of Buddhism in the West. With the founding of Naropa, Trungpa realized his vision of creating a university with a Buddhist heritage that would combine contemplative studies with traditional Western scholarly and artistic disciplines. His intention was that Naropa University would gather together to support many wisdom traditions in addressing contemporary problems. Today, Naropa University is evidence of this nonsectarian vision of wisdom and service.

Naropa’s founding was inspired by Nalanda University, which flourished in India from the fifth to the thirteenth centuries CE. At Nalanda University, Buddhist philosophy and the discipline of meditation provided an environment in which scholars, artists, and healers from many Asian countries and religious traditions came to study and debate. Nalanda was known for education that joined intellect and intuition, scholarly rigor and spiritual inquiry, and an atmosphere of mutual appreciation and respect among different traditions. The University takes its name from Naropa, the eleventh-century abbot of Nalanda University. Renowned as a great Buddhist scholar, teacher, and practitioner, Naropa recognized that the acquisition of knowledge alone does not lead to wisdom and a deep understanding of the world. Various accounts of Naropa’s life portray his gradual realization that his study of words and texts had not automatically produced wis-

dom or appreciation for the meaning behind the words. After leaving his position at Nalanda and traveling across the Indian subcontinent for several years, Naropa came to understand that entering the dialectic tension between an object and its interior, a word and its meaning, with the support of a particular set of practices and the guidance of a teacher resulted in a more direct and accurate encounter with the world.

The abbot Naropa’s discovery is important to understanding the pedagogical inspiration and commitments of our contemporary university. Trungpa, Rinpoche’s travels in the United States made him aware of the social disruptions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and he observed that the balance of intellectual and inner knowledge was glaringly absent from American education (and society more broadly). He wished to reawaken the abbot Naropa’s legacy by creating a contemporary model of education that asked students to develop a living relationship with their subject matter, in the process coming to know about themselves as well as the world of ideas. Striving to integrate intellectual inquiry, creative inspiration, and disciplined contemplative practice, Trungpa envisioned learning as a slow process of chewing, swallowing, and digesting information rather than a devouring process without absorption. In his view, education could be the full integration of word and meaning, knowledge and wisdom, mind and heart.

This aspiration “to educate the whole person, cultivating academic excellence and contemplative insight in order to infuse knowledge with wisdom” remains a vital element of Naropa University’s mission (RR, MD-1). It is found in the multiple ways in which faculty and students interact around their subject matter in classes (e.g., the use of a “mindfulness bell” that provides for brief respite from classroom discussion so that students can reflect on the experience before exploration of the subject matter resumes); in the way the academic calendar is structured (which includes one day each semester devoted to meditation, spiritual teachings, space awareness exercises, and so on); and in the way some academic departments articulate their degree requirements (e.g., several undergraduate and graduate degrees require students to participate in retreats, though not necessarily Buddhist, lasting from a weekend up to several weeks). Administrative meetings and relationships are equally conducted with a view toward the infusion of contemplative practices into the business of the University (RR, HR-13. “The Path of Contemplative Administration at Naropa University” is also incorporated into the Employee Handbook, RR, HB-2, p. 12).

Although Naropa’s origins are Buddhist-inspired, the University is ecumenical and nonsectarian. Naropa aligns with and considers itself to be the founding institution in North America dedicated to the pedagogical movement known as “contemplative education.” Although there are variations across individual faculty member’s classrooms, in general Naropa’s pedagogy combines the Western academic tradition of observation, critique, and discovery with the Buddhist approach to learning based upon the three prajnas or levels of knowing: hearing, contemplating, and meditating. The term “contemplative pedagogy,” or “contemplative learning,” is used to embrace all three levels. When one is presented with material, step one—hearing—is to approach the material with an open and precise mind, attending closely and without bias to what is being presented. The second step—contemplating—involves revisiting the material through analysis, discussion, debate, and interaction from the perspective of one’s own personal experience. In this step, the learning becomes more personal. The final step—meditating—involves a process of letting go of conceptual or categorical thinking, which cultivates greater awareness, openness, and self-knowledge.

The Criterion 1 chapter describes in greater depth the manner in which this inspiration is manifested in the Mission Statement and related documents and how it is lived in our practices both within and outside the classroom.

Naropa University (at that time the Naropa Institute) began in 1974 as a summer program in Boulder, Colorado, in two, five-week sessions that attracted more than 1,500 student participants per session and approximately 55 academic, artistic, spiritual, and social luminaries who served as faculty. The Institute’s classrooms were located in tents, instructors’ homes, and various other meeting rooms

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2 RR refers to the virtual Resource Room, MD refers to the primary folder (Mission Documents, in this case), and the number refers to the document or sub-folder.

Introduction

At the time of its initial application for accreditation by the North Central Association in 1984, Naropa enrolled 235 degree-seeking students. Graduate students were then able to complete degrees in only three programs: Buddhist Studies, Contemplative Psychotherapy, and Dance Therapy. Upper-division coursework leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree could be completed in Buddhist Studies, Contemplative Psychology, Movement Studies, Writing & Poetics, Music, and Book Arts. Eighteen Core Faculty members taught across the degree-granting programs.

In 1996, 10 years after being granted full accreditation status, Naropa enrolled 900 degree-seeking students; approximately 40 percent were undergraduates, and 60 percent were graduate students. The full four-year undergraduate program began in 1999. Students were able to complete degrees in nine undergraduate and seven graduate fields. At that time, approximately 40 “full-time” faculty and 105 administrative staff (92 FTE) served the student population.

Throughout the Boulder community. In its first years, it was not an uncommon practice for Naropa faculty and staff to volunteer their time or tithe their salary back to the University as a gesture of passion and dedication in order to see the unprecedented “one hundred year” project off the ground. It was also not unusual for staff and faculty to slip into the role of student and vice versa, in the sense that Naropa was (and continues to be) a community of lifelong learners, where all members are active participants in a dynamic interplay of personal and academic growth and learning. This extraordinarily high level of commitment to the University by faculty, staff, administration, and students remains a fundamental aspect of the community culture.

As noted above, at the heart of Naropa University’s mission is the cultivation of a dynamic interplay of opposites. These are expressed in the Mission Statement as the blending of intellect and intuition, academic excellence and contemplative insight, the best of Eastern and Western traditions, and inner development and service to the world. The dialectic resolution of these various poles is inherent in the founding vision and remains at the heart of our institutional atmosphere today.

Since its energetic beginning, Naropa University has been evolving and maturing, and as the Mission Statement proclaims, has charted a course to be “North America’s leading institution of contemplative education” (RR, MD-1). The fall 2009 census (the time of the writing of the current self-study) shows a total enrollment of 1,056 degree-seeking students, of whom 464 are undergraduate and 592 are graduate students. These students are served by 71 Ranked Faculty (61 FTE) who teach across a full general education program, 10 undergraduate majors, and 9 graduate degrees (some with multiple concentrations). Naropa attracts students from 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 24 countries, offering a diverse community of people the opportunity to weave contemplative insight and practice into their academic and scholarly pursuits. Students can earn BA, BFA, MA, MPA, and MDiv degrees, as well as professional development training and certifications. Programs are offered at the graduate and undergraduate level in the arts (creative writing, music, theater and visual art), education, environmental leadership, peace studies, psychology, and religious studies (RR, HB-5).

The University is located on three instructional campuses in the city of Boulder, Colorado:

• The Arapahoe Campus in central Boulder, which houses classrooms, faculty and administrative offices, a large auditorium that serves as a meeting space and performing arts center, a meditation hall, the (independently owned) Naropa Bookstore and cafeteria, a computer laboratory, a student lounge, and the Allen Ginsberg Library;

• The Paramita Campus, northeast of the Arapahoe campus, which houses the classrooms and offices for the Graduate School of Psychology and a meditation hall;

• The Nalanda Campus in east Boulder, with offices and teaching spaces for the performing and visual arts, a meditation hall, an events center for the School of Extended Studies and Naropa community events, and administrative offices for Extended Studies and the Office of Marketing and Communications. The Nalanda Campus also serves as the temporary location for the University Archives. In addition, 14,500 square feet of the building remain unoccupied and poised for final renovation and build out pending the out

per course remuneration. Within the category of Ranked Faculty are Instructors (those eligible for an annual salary and benefits, with renewable one- or two-year contracts, and no opportunity for promotion) and Core Faculty (similar but not identical to tenure-track faculty, who receive an annual salary and benefits, renewable contracts from three to five years in duration, and the ability to seek promotion from Assistant to Associate to Full Professor status). Some Ranked Faculty positions are less than full-time.
come of the campus master planning process. A fourth facility, located just a few blocks from the Arapahoe campus, serves as an apartment complex or dormitory for all first-year students under the age of 21. In addition, at the time of this writing, Naropa conducts instruction at a facility in England, affiliated with the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA), where the MFA in Lecoq-based Performance is taught. Naropa has notified the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that the partnership with LISPA will be terminated by summer 2010 and that the 2009–2010 academic year represents a teach-out year for the final class of students.

Change and maturation continue to characterize Naropa University. Significant initiatives since our last comprehensive accreditation in 2000 include the following:

- The development, approval, and initial implementation of a new Strategic Plan, “Deliver Distinction with Excellence,” which was ratified by the Board of Trustees in fall 2008 after an 18-month process that involved faculty, staff, students, senior administrators, alumni, community members, and trustees (RR, SP-9);
- The development, approval, and initial implementation of an Academic Plan that develops a university-wide view of the curriculum and is designed to give greater coherence to the undergraduate curriculum and stronger alignment between both graduate and undergraduate curricula and the University’s Mission Statement. The document was approved by the Academic Council (the body of all Ranked/Core Faculty) and presented to the Board of Trustees in spring 2009, which endorsed it at its October 2009 meeting (RR, AA-1);
- The establishment of an Enrollment Management Plan designed to implement the initial phases of the enrollment and revenue growth targets established by the Strategic Plan. This second document was presented by senior management to the Board of Trustees at the May 2009 meetings and continues to shape budget and other resource planning (RR, AA-36);
- Progress on an institution-wide culture of assessment. In part, this is embodied in three new high-level positions focused on learning outcomes assessment and program planning (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, and Assistant Dean of New Programs and Strategic Initiatives) and in the establishment of the Department Systematic Review, an annual process of program review and resource planning for all academic departments initiated by the Office of Academic Affairs in fall 2006. A three-year cycle of assessment planning, implementation, and curriculum revision was initiated in spring 2007. Several administrative offices have similarly developed ongoing reviews of their institutional effectiveness. These efforts are described in considerable depth in our discussion of Criteria 2 and 3;
- The continued development of a planning culture, especially for academic initiatives, that resulted in the judicious pruning of some programs and careful creation of others. The MA in Gerontology and Long-Term Care was terminated in 2005, and the School of Extended Studies reduced its program offerings as of January 2009. The BA in Peace Studies gained approval from the Higher Learning Commission in 2007 (RR, SS-56).
- Re-visioning and restructuring of the undergraduate programs and services, including refinement of the general education curriculum, student housing, and growth in cocurricular activities;
- Two successful presidential transitions (2003 and 2009).

We recognize that this is a lot for any university to undertake. At the same time, this self-study demonstrates that Naropa has focused on managing this change by developing better governance and administrative structures, slowing the generation of new academic programs, and weighing the sustainability of existing programs. The Strategic Plan calls for the development of several new degree programs as part of an overall strategy to grow enrollment and thus increase revenue. A highly collaborative and deliberative process is now underway to assess the feasibility of particular new programs, including analysis of potential investment costs, infrastructure needs, and market conditions before proposals work their way through our internal governance structure and are submitted to the Higher Learning Commission as part of a change request. The University is prepared to invest between three and four years in the development of new degree programs.

Further, for the past two years, the University has been a member of Eduventures, a research consortium with membership throughout the United States and Canada, and has commissioned and made use of two market studies in an effort to plan for growth. One study focused on nondegree professional education in the Boulder/Denver corridor, and the second focused on the feasibility of our offering an existing counseling psychology graduate degree via low-residency
or part-time delivery. Planning occurs in a deliberative process on campus and is based on both internal and external research and perspective (RR, AA-42, AA-43, and AA-44).

An equally important development in the last several years is the greater focus and intentionality placed on discussions of the role of contemplative education at the University. Whereas many members of the faculty were early students of the University’s founder, over time Naropa has attracted academics from a variety of educational and spiritual backgrounds. The dynamic interplay among representatives of different artistic, contemplative, and scholarly traditions is palpable at the University, and this has also meant that greater attention needs to be paid to the commonalities and differences across backgrounds and lineages. Several steps have been taken in this regard.

First, in 2005, the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE) was inaugurated through a grant from the Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism to develop a Core (general education) Seminar on contemplative modes of learning. This has been adopted as a requirement for all undergraduates. CACE also sponsors a summer workshop on contemplative pedagogy for college and university professors from throughout the United States and Canada. The sponsoring faculty members use the annual preparation for the workshop to deepen their own understanding of and collaboration around contemplative teaching. Thus, the summer workshop enables Naropa faculty to bring our unique pedagogy to a wider audience and serves to reinforce the faculty’s own commitments and understanding.

Second, a number of faculty members have participated in fellowships and retreats sponsored by the Center for Contemplative Mind and Society, an independent nonprofit organization that studies contemplative practices in academe and other professional fields. These fellowships have resulted in research and curriculum development that have been brought back to the Naropa campus.

Finally, the faculty’s maturation has also yielded greater curiosity and inquisitiveness about the University’s heritage. This has resulted in publications about contemplative pedagogy and the beginnings of an internal audit and taxonomy of the range of teaching practices currently employed by Naropa faculty (See RR, OTH-6 and AA-61 for examples).

In brief, Naropa has experienced many changes in the last ten years. At the same time, a burgeoning culture of planning and assessment, along with greater attention to the pedagogical frame that supports much of our work, has ensured that these changes occurred smoothly and deliberately. See Criterion 2 for further discussion about institutional planning.

Accreditation History

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools initially accredited Naropa University in 1986. At its last Comprehensive Visit in 2000, the University received continued accreditation for a period of ten years. A Mandated Focused Visit in 2004 emphasized assessment, and a Requested Focused Visit in 2007 led to HLC approval for a new BA in Peace Studies (as required by HLC stipulation). The 2007 visit also included a review of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies (now decommissioned by the University with the consent of the HLC) and consideration of our graduate culture more generally. Here we address challenges and concerns raised by Evaluation Teams at and subsequent to our last 2000 Comprehensive Visit, as well as what we believe to be significant advancements in University operations since these observations were initially made.

Challenges Identified in the 2000 Comprehensive Evaluation

The evaluation team identified 14 challenge areas:

1. The institution has not established assessment as a high priority and devoted sufficient resources to its implementation.

Naropa University has made notable strides in this area by establishing learning outcomes assessment as a high priority within the Office of Academic Affairs, committing significant financial and human resources to assessment of learning outcomes and laying the foundations for sustained assessment practices. Since the 2000 Comprehensive Visit, Naropa created two new positions specifically tasked with learning outcomes assessment, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean of Instruction and Curriculum, who oversee faculty training, academic departments’ development of comprehensive assessment plans and updates, and an annual state-of-assessment report. In addition, the newly
created position of Assistant Dean of Program Development and Strategic Initiatives is tasked with ensuring that new program proposals contain robust assessment plans and with supervising the external program review of existing degrees as part of a commitment within Academic Affairs to “continuous improvement.” (See Criteria 2 and 3 for discussion of the Department Systematic Review and related efforts in this area).

Further, the position of Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education has been redefined so that it now oversees the alignment of the undergraduate curriculum (both general education and majors) with the six learning outcomes delineated in the Academic Plan. The Associate Dean leads the Undergraduate Oversight Committee, whose purpose is to align and integrate learning goals across the educational offerings provided students over a four-year journey; to develop a student learning outcomes assessment plan for the undergraduate curriculum, and to inform discussions about content areas to be added to the curriculum. By establishing Naropa’s curricular and pedagogical vision and learning outcomes, the first part of the Academic Plan provides a coherent and integrative structure for assessment and continuous improvement.

2. Naropa has not worked out an “institution-wide deliberative process that strikes the proper balance between consensus building and the prerogatives of management.”

The past ten years reflect a period of significant maturation by the University in terms of its governance and management practices. For example, a University Budget Committee (UBC) was established to ensure that various constituencies below the level of the President’s cabinet (Senior Staff) could analyze and provide recommendations regarding the annual budget. The UBC, cochaired by the Vice President for Finance and a Ranked Faculty member, represents three constituencies: faculty (including Adjunct Faculty), staff, and students. UBC documents make it clear that the committee provides recommendations to the President and Senior Staff, who are charged with creating a final budget proposal for the Board of Trustees (RR, PR-9).

In the area of new program development and major curricular revisions, the University has come to recognize that previous procedures did not provide adequate shared governance and transparent decision-making. In 2007, the Office of Academic Affairs and Cauldron (the faculty’s executive committee) developed a detailed document that defines the types of vetting and approval needed for curriculum and program proposals based on the potential institutional change that is involved (RR, AA-16). More specifically, the document delineates four separate levels of review (ranging from minor course title changes to completely new degree programs) and the requirements for proposals to be analyzed by various members of the community before being submitted for final consideration. On the one hand, this clarified process enabled the Department of Religious Studies to propose a significant restructuring of its MA degree (which had an awkward and confusing structure in the past), and on the other, slowed the development of a Social Justice minor because of input from a potentially competing program.

Finally, the 18-month process that resulted in the Strategic Plan brought all constituencies together in a highly collaborative and involved process. Two distinct phases of strategic planning can be noted: a grass-roots initiative in which action committees, populated by faculty and staff, used multi-constituent focus group and survey data to establish several broad directions for the University to pursue; and a subsequent macro-level process that used ideas, insights, and analyses coming from the action committees to develop a more focused and comprehensive institutional view. The President supervised the process, and all parties were aware of the role of the Board of Trustees in final deliberations and adoption of the plan. (See eropa.naropaedu/staff/strategic/root.asp.)

Further maturation of the University’s governance and management systems are likely to occur in the coming years, as President Stuart Lord fully takes the helm. At present, plans are in place for the creation of a President’s Communication Forum to ensure timely and interactive communication between the President and both senior and middle managers. President Lord has also introduced the concept of listening circles as a vehicle for him to learn about issues of pressing concern to University employees and students. A significant reorganization of the presidential cabinet, currently called Senior Staff, is likely to occur prior to the arrival of the HLC site team.

3. Pace of change is “outstripping the university’s ability to communicate priorities and manage the process of change among all major stakeholders.”

The period since the 2000 Comprehensive Visit has seen significant reductions in program offerings, an attempt to ensure greater financial sustainability for the University, and greater attention to core operations. During this period, all of the study abroad options sponsored by the University were closed. The MicroFinance Institute, hosted by the School of Extended Studies, left Naropa for a location in Italy; and Extended Studies itself was downsized in 2008 to focus on continuing professional education rather than personal enrichment workshops.
Many of the changes that have occurred in this ten-year period have been controversial and emotion-laden. However, in all cases, a deliberative process resulted in program closures, reductions, or modifications, and most in the community came to see the necessity of these changes. See the discussion in Criteria 2 and 3 for more details about these changes.

Perhaps the most direct way of addressing this 2000 concern is to invoke the strategic planning process, which was data-informed, inclusive, and transparent and which produced a Strategic Plan that received wide ratification by trustees, senior managers, and representatives of faculty and staff. The plan is now used as a lens for much of the University’s work. Minutes of Academic Council, Cauldron, Chairs Council, Staff Executive Committee, and Town Hall meetings document the numerous occasions when strategic plan priorities and budgetary implications have been discussed and formed the basis for institutional action. (See discussion below, point 5.)

4. New programs could impede the ability to sustain existing programs.

Naropa has undertaken a number of steps since the 2000 Comprehensive Evaluation to ensure a planned and resource-appropriate integration of existing and new programs. First, as the number of students and programs has increased, so too has the number of Ranked/Core Faculty. Thus, the University has invested resources to meet the instructional needs of new programs and to distribute the increasingly more complex burden of governance and program administration.

Second, the University periodically reviews the sustainability of individual programs and has, when necessary, judiciously eliminated programs that did not adequately contribute to the institution’s well-being. Academic programs are reviewed for their contribution to overhead (CTO), a measure of a program’s capacity to generate student tuition to cover direct instructional and administrative expenses and return some overhead to support central University operations. The Board of Trustees established a minimum CTO of 40 percent, and one program was closed because it was unable to sustain that level of student enrollment (RR, AA-58).

Third, beginning in fall 2006, the Office of Academic Affairs and Cauldron developed a program proposal review and approval process that is broad-based and deliberative and that includes consideration of budget implications, the potential impact on existing programs, mission fit, and other variables. (See Criterion 3 for more details about the new curriculum approval process.)

5. Strategic Plan (“View 2005”) is not strong or specific enough.

Naropa University’s strategic planning efforts have matured since the initial writing of “View 2005,” producing a community that is more accustomed to data-informed planning and is capable of collaborative visioning of our institutional future. Equally important, the institution has increasingly developed plans that are specific and actionable.

As a result of the comments received from the site team about the first version of “View 2005,” Naropa undertook a redrafting process that was more inclusive and aimed for greater specificity of goals. A number of actions were taken by the University in accord with the revised document, such as the creation of four new degree programs and the modification of four existing degree programs (out of six initially delineated in the document) to include new concentrations or delivery modes. However, no control sheet or final report exists that documents the range of accomplishments resulting from the implementation of “View 2005” (RR, SP-6).

In February 2004 and May 2005, the then-new president, Thomas Coburn, developed an initial framework for a comprehensive strategic planning process. Those documents articulated specific goals and strategies and significantly directed University actions for the first two years of his presidency. Examples of these actions include the establishment of the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education, the placement of the three professional psychology master’s programs under a single rubric (the Graduate School of Psychology), and the appointment of a senior-level Diversity Officer. Other aspects of the document, known as “Naropa Directions 2005–2008,” ultimately informed the formal campus-wide strategic planning process that began in fall 2006 (RR, SP-7 and SP-8).

The most important of these accomplishments was the review and redrafting of the Mission Statement, which was considered a prelude to institution-wide strategic planning. (See Criterion 1 for more details about the process and inputs to the Mission Statement revision.)

In September 2008, the Board of Trustees approved a new Strategic Plan, titled “Deliver Distinction with Excellence” (RR, SP-9). The result of a highly collaborative process transpiring over 18 months, the Strategic Plan integrates input from faculty, administration, staff, trustees, students, and alumni. It identifies 14 action items and 130 steps in support of five major goals. In addition to the Strategic Plan itself, an Action Plan was created to support implementation of the major action steps and document the institution’s accomplishments (RR, SP-2). The Action Plan identifies the person (or persons) responsible for carrying out
particular steps in support of the Strategic Plan, as well as a precise deadline for each step. During the first year of implementation, Senior Staff and the President updated the Action Plan on a monthly basis. Under our new President, a position of Chief Administrative Officer has been created to ensure coordination across senior managers in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and tracking of particular outcomes.

The action items are being used to direct program development, resource allocation, enrollment management, facilities planning, and marketing. Although some action items have been modified, primarily because of changes in the U.S. economy, all actions are on track for implementation or revision based on environmental conditions. The members of Senior Staff are primarily tasked with reviewing the progress of action items, and a comprehensive budget continues to be developed to support implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Given the criticism of the last full plan that was shared with the HLC, it is important to emphasize here the extent to which the current Strategic Plan is specific and directs institutional actions. In addition, implementation of the Strategic Plan has led to three major accomplishments since fall 2008:

- The “Academic Plan—Part I,” which addresses the Strategic Plan’s charge for the faculty to clarify our unique curricular focus and pedagogy, was completed in May 2009.
- The “Academic Plan—Part II” provides a draft plan for enrollment growth in selected programs as part of fulfilling the Strategic Plan’s call to enhance revenue generation through increases in student retention and admission.
- A significant reduction in the instructional budget was inaugurated in fall 2009, which resulted from the Strategic Plan’s call for an efficiency analysis of average class size and modeling a modest 10 percent increase per department. Given that Naropa class sizes are relatively small, this has increased class size by only two students on average. It has also yielded a savings of $140,000, which exists as a line item within the Academic Affairs budget and is being used to support faculty development and to invest in initiatives that implement the Academic Plan (RR, AA-45, section 1).

In fall 2009, the President and members of Senior Staff began a review of the budgetary needs in implementing the Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, and associated Enrollment Management Plan. This process is designed to establish priorities across academic and administrative units of the University and to allocate a reserve of investment funds to support this work. An update on budgeting for the

Strategic Plan will be provided to the site team prior to its campus visit in March 2010.

6. The University’s overreliance on adjunct faculty, especially in lower-division undergraduate courses.

Significant progress has been made in the last ten years in managing the hiring of Ranked/Core Faculty and in assigning teaching loads to Ranked and Adjunct Faculty across the curriculum. In academic years 2000–2001 and 2001–2002, Ranked/Core Faculty generated approximately 33 percent of all credits. In contrast, for the two most recent full academic years (2007–2008, 2008–2009), Ranked/Core Faculty generated 57 percent and 53 percent respectively of total credits.

An even more significant change has occurred with regard to lower-division, general education coursework. In 2000–2001 and 2001–2002, Ranked/Core Faculty taught only 31 and 38 percent, respectively, of the total 192 credits that were offered by the Core Program. In 2007–2008 and 2008–2009, Ranked/Core Faculty produced 67 and 61 percent, respectively, of the 145 credits.

Finally, the instructional efficiency mandated by the Strategic Plan (the increase in class size by 10 percent and the commensurate elimination of under-enrolled class sections) resulted in the elimination of approximately 50 sections previously taught by adjuncts.

7. There has not been enough progress of faculty toward obtaining terminal degrees.

The Ranked/Core Faculty has increased by 75 percent since 2000–2001. The number of faculty holding the PhD or discipline-relevant terminal degree has also increased during this period. Ten years ago, 17 of 40 faculty members held a terminal degree (or its non-Western equivalent*). At the time of this writing, Naropa employs 71 Ranked/Core Faculty members, 39 of whom hold a terminal degree

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* The total number of credits assigned to the Core (general education) Curriculum has been reduced over the last ten years. Across all sections, 192 credit hours of Core coursework were taught in both 2000–2001 and 2001–2002, whereas 145 credit hours were taught in 2007–2008 and 148 in 2008–2009.

* Certain faculty members have gone through extensive seminary education in Asia and are recognized as Lamas within a particular lineage. Given the fields in which these individuals teach, Naropa considers such faculty to have the non-Western equivalent of a Western terminal degree. It should also be noted that a fairly strict definition of terminal degree was used in this calculation for Western-educated faculty. For example, a faculty member holding an MFA in writing who teaches psychology is not included in the tally of terminal degrees.
Introduction

Naropa University Self-Study Report

As part of the University’s self-study process for reaccreditation, all offices were asked to update their handbooks, policy manuals, and other official documents. The Faculty Handbook has gone through an extensive two-year revision process, and it is anticipated that Academic Council (the full body of Ranked and Core Faculty) will recommend ratification of the Handbook to Cauldron (the faculty’s executive committee) in spring 2010 (RR, HB-3). Most notable with regard to the currentness of University documents is the development of Eropa, a website that can be accessed from any computer on or off campus and that publishes official University documents, planning papers, and minutes of governance committees (eropa.naropa.edu).

10. Faculty compensation, benefits, and funds for research and development are inadequate.

Despite the institutional attention paid to this important issue, faculty compensation, comprising salary and benefits, continues to lag behind the cost of living in Boulder County as well as national benchmarks for university professors. Many of the planning documents developed since the last comprehensive accreditation refer to the importance of salary increases for faculty (as well as nonteaching staff), and several steps have been taken to move forward with this institutional priority.

In 2005, the University committed $450,000 for faculty raises to be paid out over multiple years. The first installment of $150,000 occurred during the 2006–2007 academic year. A smaller amount that was bundled with a cost-of-living raise for all employees was paid out in 2007–2008; $100,000 plus a cost-of-living raise was paid out in 2008–2009. The remaining money is scheduled for disbursement beginning in spring 2010 and during the 2010–2011 academic year. The first three installments were allocated across-the-board on a percentage basis to all Ranked/Core Faculty. For 2009–2010, Cauldron has agreed with Academic Affairs to have the next $100,000 installment used for salary equity adjustments. Concern about salary compression, the result of hiring new faculty at salaries slightly higher than those for veteran faculty, resulted in a request to have rank and years of service for Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors be used as the basis for distributing compensation increases.

All parties recognize that this salary commitment does not fully address the magnitude of the problem. As Table 1 makes clear, whereas salaries have increased between 25 and 38 percent in the last 10 years, only those of Assistant Professors have outpaced inflation (as measured by the Consumer Price Index).
The 2008 Strategic Plan calls attention to faculty and staff compensation and provides a model for enrollment growth and efficiency savings, the purpose of which is the achievement of greater financial sustainability for the institution and its employees. The Strategic Plan calls for the delineation of a group of benchmark institutions, with the goal of Naropa salaries reaching the 50th percentile within the comparative group. Although the financial benefits of the Strategic Plan are several years in the making, the Office of Human Resources is charged with monitoring progress toward reaching the percentile target.

With regard to resources available for training, there has been significant improvement in only the most current academic year. For the past ten years, the annual funds allocated to faculty development ranged widely, from a low of zero to a high of $23,000. For 2007–2009, these funds were augmented by a trustee gift totaling $10,000, which has slowly been spent down. More significant has been the allocation of the aforementioned efficiency savings to faculty development for the 2009–2010 academic year. As a result of the reductions in the total number of course sections offered each semester, Academic Affairs produced a savings of $140,000. These funds are a permanent line item within the Academic Affairs budget and are being used to support faculty travel, research, conference presentations, and attendance at higher education conferences to assist in the further development and implementation of the Academic Plan.7

11. New programs are implemented and changes made without sufficient NCA (and other) approvals.

This item was disputed by the University as part of its response to the Comprehensive Site Visit (RR, SS-42). Nevertheless, during the last ten years, the ad-

7 The Strategic Plan implies that efficiency savings are one means to achieve salary increases, and when Academic Affairs first began working with departments on the initiative to increase average class size by 10 percent, that was the announced purpose. As the Strategic Plan has begun to be more fully implemented by Academic Affairs, the need for investment and development dollars has become apparent. The efficiency savings are slated to provide salary increases, but in the next few years will likely be used in full for faculty development in support of the Academic Plan.

In addition, correspondence between the University and our HLC liaison during this same period also demonstrates our commitment to clarifying the programmatic changes that do and do not require HLC approval. The creation of a low-residency track within the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology program did not require such approval, as it represented a concentration within an already approved program and was not intended to be taught completely using distance

ministration has worked assiduously to notify the HLC of programmatic changes, including seeking authorization for new degree programs as required and alerting the HLC to program terminations. Since 2000, the HLC has been informed of the following (RR, SS-43):

- Request to extend accreditation to include the MDiv and MA in Contemplative Education (formal notification dated August 9, 2000);
- Request to extend accreditation to include the MFA in Theater (formal notification dated April 26, 2002);
- Request to extend accreditation to include the MFA in Theater to be taught in London, England (formal notification dated April 27, 2004);
- Request to extend accreditation to include the BA in Peace Studies (“Response to the NCA Evaluators’ Panel Report of the proposed BA in Peace Studies,” dated December 17, 2006);
- Request to suspend operations of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies (letter from Naropa University to HLC, dated December 18, 2006);
- Notification by Naropa University to HLC of final teach-out of the MLA in Creation Spirituality (letter from Naropa University to HLC, dated September 14, 2007);
- Notification by Naropa University to HLC of final teach-out of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies (letter from Naropa University to HLC, dated September 10, 2008);
- Notification by Naropa University to HLC of intention to implement a final teach-out of the MA in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology (letter from Naropa University to HLC, dated August 3, 2007);
- Notification by Naropa University to HLC of a teach-out of MFA in Theater in London, England (letter from Naropa University to HLC, dated October 16, 2009);

In addition, correspondence between the University and our HLC liaison during this same period also demonstrates our commitment to clarifying the programmatic changes that do and do not require HLC approval. The creation of a low-residency track within the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology program did not require such approval, as it represented a concentration within an already approved program and was not intended to be taught completely using distance
learning. Similarly, the low-residency MFA in Writing & Poetics did not require HLC approval in 2000, though the University corresponded with our liaison to seek verification of that fact.

12. The general education program lacks definition and assessment procedures.

Naropa’s general education program, known as the Core Curriculum, has undergone significant changes since the creation of the Naropa Core College during the 1999–2000 academic year. The term “Core Program” replaced the Core College itself in 2004–2005, and then was itself replaced by “Core Curriculum” in 2005–2006. The Office of Academic Affairs did not have steady leadership for this two-year period of time, and faculty were encouraged to take steps to improve various aspects of the general education program without engaging in meta-level planning about the vision and purpose of Naropa’s undergraduate curriculum.

The stability of the last four years and the lessons the University has learned in this regard should be highlighted. First, since the 2006–2007 academic year, Naropa’s Core Curriculum has remained largely unchanged. Students are required to complete nine credits of introductory seminars (on contemplative modes of learning, diversity, and civic engagement), two writing seminars, a humanities seminar, and five distribution courses. Although an assessment of these core seminars has not been initiated (see below), faculty learning communities meet regularly with a course leader to review course aims, teaching methods, and student responses. As a result, the Contemplative Practices Seminar underwent a modest modification for the 2009–2010 academic year. The renamed Contemplative Learning Seminar better situates the course as an introduction to contemplative education and modes of learning, not simply to meditation practice.

Second, the role of the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education has evolved during the last four years, from a largely administrative role as supervisor of the core seminars to academic leader of an integrated undergraduate curriculum.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that some major changes to the Core Curriculum are currently in the works; these have been well conceived and carefully formulated. The Academic Plan provides a robust, meta-level view of Naropa’s undergraduate education and outcomes (RR, AA-1). It establishes six learning outcomes that will be carried through and achieved by a curricular arc comprising introductory, intermediary, and advanced courses. A mentoring system is also proposed as a way of supporting students’ integration of contemplative and academic work in order to prepare for careers or further study upon graduation. (See Criteria 3 and 4 for a full discussion of the undergraduate curriculum and assessment changes intimated by the Academic Plan.)

13. Study Abroad programs do not meet legal, liability, safety, health, and assessment guidelines.

In response to the evaluation during the Comprehensive Site Visit, Naropa developed a number of manuals and procedures for study abroad programs (for example, RR, AA-60). These materials were included in the 2004 Focused Visit. However, because of financial constraints and the need to take a fresh look at the alignment of study abroad programs with the University’s mission, all study abroad programs have been suspended. Study abroad had been developed primarily as a source of additional revenue for the University, and degree students were not encouraged by their departments to enroll; in addition, study abroad was only minimally related to the curriculum in particular major departments (see Criterion 4).

The recently adopted Academic Plan recognizes strong interest among students to pursue international and intercultural learning experiences, as well as our institutional obligation to prepare them for the complexities of the world. The plan calls for mini-semester study and travel led by Naropa faculty tied to the curriculum in particular departments. As this aspect of the Academic Plan is realized, the University will make use of, and where appropriate, expand the legal and related documents that were established.

14. The library is uneven in holdings, is cramped for space, and has an insufficient budget.

The 2000 Visiting Team raised a number of concerns about the library services that Naropa offers its students. Although library services remain an area of necessary improvement, the University has made progress in providing access to the resources that students need for research and personal growth.

In 2000, the general collections of the Allen Ginsberg Library (AGL) consisted of more than 26,000 books, 111 ongoing print periodical subscriptions, and more than 3,000 commercial recordings. As of November 2009, the general collections consist of 28,608 books, 81 ongoing print periodical subscriptions, and 4,891 commercial recordings. The increase in book holdings is actually greater than it first appears as a major deaccessioning initiative in summer 2007 removed 966 outdat ed, damaged, or otherwise inappropriate volumes. The decrease in print periodical subscriptions is less significant than it may seem; the print reduction has been
accompanied by significant investment in online subscription databases. In 2000, Naropa had subscriptions to three electronic databases appropriate for university-level research. As of November 2009, Naropa subscribes to 30 such databases.

In 2000, Naropa’s special collections consisted of about 3,400 recordings; just under 1,400 Tibetan texts; more than 6,000 slides; and an uncertain number of art objects, rare books, and manuscripts. Almost all of the recordings have moved to the University archives, which has played a greater role as a resource for student and faculty research since the creation of a merged Library and Archives department in summer 2007. As of November 2009, Naropa’s special collections and archives hold approximately 11,500 recordings; 1,310 Tibetan texts; 7,000 slides; just under 700 art objects; 763 rare books; and 663 boxes of photographs, manuscripts and other documents. The circulation of Naropa’s materials during the last complete school year (2008–2009) was 16,236, excluding items on reserve, which is a 22 percent increase over the 1998–1999 circulation of 13,357 items.

Recognizing the lean budget available to the Allen Ginsberg Library, the University has acted creatively and responsibly in providing bibliographic materials to students and faculty. Naropa supplements its collections by offering two valuable services: borrowing privileges at the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU) and interlibrary loan. On average, Naropa issues more than 170 CU vouchers per semester; these permit full borrowing privileges of print materials. Also on average, Naropa fills around 590 interlibrary loan requests for books each year and around 165 requests for articles.

Though situated in an attractive cottage-style building, the physical space allotted to the Library remains inadequate. In response to the Visiting Team’s report in 2000, the University cited plans to increase library space by 50 percent following the completion of Nalanda Hall (now known as the Administration Building). This expansion never occurred, and the Library currently occupies the same 1,735 square feet as it did in 2000. However, some modest additions have occurred. A service point, occupying roughly 75 square feet on the Paramita Campus, was initiated in 2008. In addition, approximately 1,125 square feet of archival work and storage space is now available on the Nalanda Campus.

Although these 1,200 total square feet—an increase of 75 percent in the Library’s total footprint—are not physically connected to the AGL, they do relieve pressure on the main library and contribute to improved services across all three campuses. The recent completion of the Academic Plan and the upcoming campus master planning process should provide fuel for a major rethinking of the resources (human and physical) made available to the Library. With regard to the

Areas Requiring Institutional Attention from the 2004 Focused Visit

1. Goals and objectives, as well as the value of assessment, are not consistently articulated.
2. More resources are needed on assessment, including training for faculty, especially adjunct faculty.
3. Assessment of student achievement needs to be integrated into planning and budgeting.
4. An assessment committee needs to be integrated into the governance structure.
5. Greater shared commitment to assessment, including inter-program cooperation, is needed.

Specifically, the 2004 Evaluation Team found that “further institutional attention and Commission follow-up is required in the area of focus,” that is:

Use of assessment results for improvement in curriculum development and teaching and learning is uneven. While the general education program and some degree programs have “closed the loop,” many degree programs have either not systematically collected data or have yet to document improvement based on the systematic collection and examination of data.

It is apparent that, prior to 2004, Naropa’s progress in planning and implementing a university-wide assessment initiative was uneven at best. However, significant progress has been made in this area since 2006. The Criterion 3 chapter describes in detail the staff resources that have been allocated to assessment, the multiple opportunities for training that have been provided to faculty, and
the progress that has been made by departments in filing assessment plans and conducting annual assessment studies. The Office of Academic Affairs elected not to create a freestanding governance committee to address assessment planning and implementation, in part because it felt it necessary to hire professionals with a broad understanding of assessment to build critical knowledge and capacity for all faculty around assessment and for assessment to permeate the work within departments and degree programs. In addition, the two governance committees responsible for curriculum review, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Curriculum Committee, now routinely evaluate new course proposals with an eye toward course-based assessment, and they have begun to incorporate review of the fit between new syllabi and assessment plans before recommending approval. (See below and Criterion 3 for a discussion of learning outcomes assessment.)

Areas Requiring Institutional Attention from the 2007 Focused Visit

In 2006, Naropa began the formal process of requesting authorization to offer an undergraduate major in Peace Studies. At around the same time, the University became aware that its MA in Interdisciplinary Studies, which began operations in 2001 as a pilot, had not received HLC approval (RR, PR-8). The Peace Studies application triggered a demand by the HLC for a Focused Visit. In addition, the University’s request to suspend the Interdisciplinary Studies graduate degree shaped the site team’s agenda.

Request for Change — BA in Peace Studies

The Evaluation Team identified assessment of student learning outcomes across all syllabi in the Peace Studies program as an area requiring further institutional attention. No areas requiring commission follow-up were identified. Since the inauguration of the degree in fall 2007, the Department of Peace Studies has filed a full plan for student learning outcomes assessment and has made progress in implementing this. The department’s assessment approach relies on an analysis of students’ capstone work, and the necessary data have been collected from all graduating students to date. The department will have its first significant graduating class in spring 2010 and will complete its first substantive assessment report for the 2009–2010 academic year at that time.

Other accreditation issue. University catalog needs to correct its information about accreditation.

Correct information, along with the HLC’s Mark of Accreditation is available at www.naropa.edu/about/accreditation.cfm. The course catalogue will be corrected in its next printing.

Evaluation of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies

The 2007 Evaluation Team concurred with the University’s decision to suspend the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies. The team identified four areas related to the degree program requiring further institutional attention: (1) the lack of clear evidence of integration or synthesis across courses for students to achieve interdisciplinarity; (2) the lack of a clear differentiation between graduate and undergraduate work in the syllabi of courses cross-listed for undergraduate and graduate credit; (3) the absence of an effective assessment for the program; and (4) the failure of graduate courses in this program to demonstrate graduate-level rigor, especially with regard to research expectations.

INTD Teachout – Naropa responded on two levels to the 2007 team’s observations. First, we have endeavored to achieve a responsible teach-out of the MA in Interdisciplinary Studies program, with the last student scheduled to graduate at the end of the 2009–2010 academic year. Prior to the 2007 team visit, the Vice President for Academic Affairs determined that the existing infrastructure was inadequate to support a rigorous master’s program. The University ceased admission of new students and withdrew the request to receive retroactive authorization from the HLC to offer the degree. Subsequent to the team visit, the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies notified students of the termination of the master’s program and has worked to assist each in meeting degree requirements. Naropa confirmed the institution’s intention to engage in a teach-out in an e-mail to the HLC in 2007 (RR, SS-49 and SS-52). We will notify the HLC as soon as the final student’s graduation is confirmed.

Cross Listing – Second, the 2007 team’s more general concerns about the mixing of graduate and undergraduate work prompted a thorough review of all cross-listed courses in the catalog. In Spring 2007, the Vice President for Academic Affairs asked all departments to review courses conferring either undergraduate or graduate credit; to develop a justification for maintaining the cross-listing; and to differentiate more clearly the learning outcomes, course requirements, grading procedures, and teaching practices for any remaining courses. This review also provided perspective on the proliferation of cross-listed courses, many of
which were created in the 1990s to meet the increasing demand for undergraduate courses. Conversely, because many of the counseling psychology courses were closed to Interdisciplinary Studies graduate students, departments offering undergraduate courses in this area (as well as others) were encouraged to provide seats for these students. Both trends resulted in a blurring of some undergraduate and graduate courses.

The recent review of cross-listed, cross-level courses has resulted in greater differentiation between undergraduate and graduate courses. Syllabi with distinct and appropriate learning outcomes, course requirements, and grading processes are now required for undergraduate and graduate sections, although we have not yet achieved full compliance. Equally important, the total number of courses that are cross-listed has been reduced over the last two years. In 2007, the team was confronted with course offerings that included 202 cross-listed courses, whereas the 2009–2010 course schedule contains only 96. This significant reduction results, in part, from the curriculum revision and cross-listings reevaluation undertaken by one of the University’s larger departments (Religious Studies). Pending the outcome of the external program review of the Department of Writing & Poetics, currently one of the departments still offering a large number of cross-listed courses, it is likely that the overall number of cross-listed courses will decline further.

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<th>Table 2. Cross-Listed Courses in Academic Years</th>
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<th>Semester</th>
<th>Semester Total</th>
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<td>Fall 2006</td>
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<td>Fall 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>202</td>
<td>96</td>
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The Criterion 3 chapter describes in greater depth the steps taken by the Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction to coax departments into developing clear rationales for the remaining cross-listed courses. That person is also responsible for review of all semester syllabi, with special attention to clear differentiation of undergraduate and graduate versions of the same course. A recently completed audit of syllabi for cross-listed courses indicates that expectations for faculty to develop even more rigorous differences between assignments, learning outcomes, and evaluation policies must be heightened (RR, AA-56).
Introduction

Instruction has served as a resource for both committees, especially with regard to the use of assessment planning in evaluating new course and program proposals, though he has primarily sat on the undergraduate committee. A comparable staff appointment is needed to the graduate committee.

Although acknowledging the perspective of the 2007 Evaluation Team, Academic Affairs determined that greater attention in the short run needed to be turned to the undergraduate governance structure (see Criterion 4). On the heels of the Strategic Plan and Academic Plan, as well as analyses of undergraduate student retention (see Criterion 2), the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education (with the support of the Vice President for Academic Affairs) requested that Cauldron convene an undergraduate faculty body charged with developing a common view of our undergraduate programming. This body, the Undergraduate Oversight Committee, is working with the six learning outcomes established by the Academic Plan, as well as the proposed developmental model, to create an integrated educational experience including general education and major courses, learning communities, and cocurricular and extracurricular activities (RR, AA-45 and AA-46).

Finally, at the time of this writing, our newly appointed President is beginning discussions on a reorganization of his cabinet. Parallel to this, the Vice President for Academic Affairs is developing a plan to elevate the position of undergraduate Associate Dean and create a comparable dean’s position for graduate education.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

This area was identified as a weakness in the HLC 2000, 2004, and 2007 visits. The Staff Analysis letter following the most recent HLC visit (June 11, 2007) concluded by offering two views of Naropa University’s status with regard to assessment:

It is disappointing that Naropa University is still in so basic a stage in the development of its assessment program, especially since this has been a concern of the Higher Learning Commission since 2000. The last seven years have seen little progress in assessment at Naropa. The institution appears to be in a good position at the moment, however, in terms of developing a fully implemented assessment program that provides valuable feedback data that will affect the development and revision of academic programs. If the University retains stable academic leadership, it should be in a good position for its comprehensive visit in 2009–2010.

The University has taken this feedback seriously and committed staff, training, and support to assessment. We have created a coherent process for assessment of each program’s goals, learning outcomes, and student achievement, and a university-wide culture that understands and values assessment is emerging. Since 2000, we have developed three positions tasked with assessment (Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education). In addition, in fall 2009, a standing committee of undergraduate faculty was formed to oversee the implementation of the Academic Plan through undergraduate education, including assessment and integration of goals and outcomes across the various aspects of the undergraduate curriculum.

The annual Department Systematic Review (DSR) process calls for each program to articulate goals and learning outcomes, present a three-year implementation plan, and analyze results (see Criteria 3 and 4 for more details). As a result of the DSR process and training opportunities related to assessment, 85 percent of degree programs have been judged to have adequately articulated goals and learning outcomes, and 65 percent to have produced an appropriate assessment implementation plan. Given the three-year cycle, it is not altogether surprising that only 55 percent of programs have fully articulated a process to implement, interpret, disseminate, and use assessment data as an integral tool in curriculum development, budgeting, faculty development, and other programmatic decisions.

In the past, our assessment processes have been hindered by several overlapping factors: (1) a culture that was, at times, wary of over-quantifying subtle aspects of students’ learning, arising in part from not having an adequate definition of contemplative education that would invite formal assessment; (2) a lack of understanding of assessment on the part of some faculty; (3) the perception that assessment was an “add-on” to teaching and not central or foundational; (4) a lack of institutional support (including training, resources, and requirements) for assessment; and (5) a lack of cross-discipline cooperation in assessment, especially in the undergraduate and Core curricula.

These factors have been addressed through a number of responses, including the creation of the DSR process, the adoption of an Academic Plan that articulates six learning outcomes emblematic of a Naropa education, and the allocation of resources in the form of new positions and training for faculty and staff (see Criterion 3). Another constraining factor has been institutional change (as the 2007 Staff Analysis pointed out). The Office of Academic Affairs has been stable and growing since the current Vice President was appointed in July 2006, and most...
of its growth has been directed at learning assessment and resource planning. Although it is not universal at Naropa, many faculty members now express excitement about the prospects of developing assessment tools that are appropriate to contemplative education. This effort to define and assess contemplative education has been the focus of recent faculty retreats, research and publications, and the sharing of pedagogical and evaluation resources across courses and disciplines. Clearly, Naropa is still in the process of developing a fully robust assessment of student learning, yet progress has been made in the last four years.

Process of Self-Study

In March 2008, then-President Thomas Coburn invited a senior faculty member to coordinate the self-study process, and in August 2008, the President and Coordinator invited faculty and staff to constitute the Self-Study Steering Committee (SSSC). Consisting of five faculty and five administrative staff (in addition to the coordinator) and under the tutelage of the President, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the committee met regularly to plan its approach to data collection and analysis. During this 18-month process, a member of the Board of Trustees was appointed as a liaison to the SSSC, a student representative was appointed, and a writer-editor (who is also a former Naropa administrator and an Adjunct Faculty member) was hired. From September 2008 until the final report was completed in December 2009, committee membership changed several times. This resulted from members’ other work obligations, sabbatical leaves, and employment resignations, and substitute members were appointed. In fall 2009, the Vice President and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs assumed a more active role, assisting the remaining committee members with deepening the analysis found in this document. The President and the SSSC Coordinator updated the community regularly (RR, SS-1 and SS-27–30). The aim of the SSSC’s configuration was to empower faculty and staff, and with the support of senior management and those most familiar with regional accreditation, to study the institution thoroughly and comprehensively, to engage the University’s internal constituencies in the self-study, and to represent this in the self-study document. For the self-study’s full timeline, see RR, SS-35, and for SSSC membership, see RR, SS-41.

The Self-Study Steering Committee organized itself along the HLC’s five criteria, with two committee members focusing on each criterion. The SSSC’s first task was to clarify the purposes for this self-study. Three broad goals were set:

- To conduct a thorough, sincere, coherent, and useful analysis that will support Naropa University’s continuing improvement and the fulfillment of its mission;
- To support the integration of more analytic and evidence-based practices of evaluation and assessment, thus furthering Naropa’s ongoing maturation.

Senior management, in consultation with the SSSC Coordinator, determined that an institutional aspiration to have the stipulation for HLC approval of new degree programs be removed would not be pursued at this time. However, it is our hope that this self-study demonstrates the University’s construction of an infrastructure to support program planning, a commitment to learning outcomes assessment, and design of a coherent Strategic Plan and Academic Plan, and that taken as a whole these developments will lay the foundation for a future request to remove the stipulation.

Much of the early work of the SSSC’s Criterion subcommittees consisted of gathering data and creating evidence statements for each criterion. These evidence statements were circulated and discussed with all members of the SSSC, and as outlines and drafts became available, they were circulated to the SSSC’s senior advisers (the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs) and to Senior Staff for comments and revisions. In August 2009, a consultant with experience in writing and reviewing self-studies visited campus, reviewed these evidence statements, and advised the Steering Committee and senior management on our progress.

A comprehensive draft of the self-study report was submitted to senior management in September 2009, and with their revisions, was shared with the Naropa community throughout the fall. Also, during the fall, two sets of focused meetings with faculty, staff, and students were held to gather comments on the draft’s accuracy and thoroughness. In the first, discussions with various constituencies (including Senior Staff, Academic Council, Cauldron, Chairs Council, several committees, and a number of groups of faculty, staff, and students) analyzed specific sets of evidence, analytic claims, and/or draft chapters. A subsequent set of meetings aimed to inform the Naropa community about the purposes and needs of the self-study and provided another chance to gather input and comment from the University’s internal constituencies, including Academic Council, the Board of Trustees, Senior Staff, administrative staff, and student government groups. These comments were integrated into the report, and senior management approved a
Introduction

Naropa University is a maturing educational institution whose mission to pro-mulgate contemplative education is a centralizing element. Naropa is proud of its Buddhist heritage and its founder’s unique vision for higher education. At the same time, we have shaped a university culture that deeply honors and respects bodies of knowledge and practice originating from across the world’s religious and spiritual traditions. We are not a religious institution per se; rather, we seek to integrate the benefits of contemplative practice with academic, artistic, and professional study. Our values are eminently expressed in a newly adopted Mission Statement and in various related mission documents, and we are increasingly becoming recognized as leaders in this field.

As a relatively young institution, we acknowledge that our values and aspirations often outstrip our material resources. We have made some progress in addressing faculty and staff compensation needs. We recognize that significant work is yet to be done, and we are taking concrete steps. We occupy three instructional campuses and a residential facility in the city of Boulder, Colorado—a fourth location, in London, England, will be vacated in mid-2010—and we have taken pains to provide reasonably adequate teaching facilities, office space, and student meeting and study space. We acknowledge the latter resources as works-in-progress, and we recognize the need to make decisions in the next few years about consolidation of our campuses, upgrades to existing buildings and technology systems, and construction of new facilities that better meet the University’s educational aims.

Our relative youth as an institution is balanced by two factors. First, we draw on traditions of contemplative practice and education that are ancient, while integrating them into the current cultural and educational context. This ancient wisdom provides an essential touchstone for our ongoing development. Second, we have deliberately pursued a process of maturation that is at once internally driven and externally focused. In the past five years, Naropa faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees have pursued an intentional path of self-analysis and planning. These efforts have resulted in a revised Mission Statement that captures our continuing vision and expresses it more clearly and concretely; a Strategic Plan that is based on benchmark data and is actionable; an Academic Plan that, perhaps for the first time at the undergraduate level for Naropa, offers a comprehensive view of the learning experiences our students can expect to encounter and learn from; and an Enrollment Management Plan that responsibly carries forth the call from the Strategic Plan to grow enrollments and improve retention rates, thereby increasing revenues. Staff and operational resources have recently been put in place to address student success at the University. We are currently developing a timetable for campus facilities and information technology planning and a major budget reduction initiative (to be updated in an addendum to this report).

The University’s ability to manage change and assess itself on a continuous basis has emerged as a critical component of our maturation. The Office of Academic Affairs has made decisive progress in establishing learning outcomes assessment as an expectation of degree programs and in using a standardized protocol for examining the health and vitality of departments. Compliance and satisfaction with our outcomes assessment and Department Systematic Review processes are relatively high, and as a result of these practices, decisions are data-informed and made in an environment of collaboration and transparency. Other administrative...
units of the University also engage in assessment of their institutional effectiveness, though a campus-wide or integrated effort is admittedly not yet in place.

Finally, Naropa University encourages both deep introspection and strong engagement with the world. Inner work and engagement are seen as mutually beneficial; inner contemplative development is both a root of the ability to serve and a fruit of such service. Members of the Naropa community are committed to providing and pursuing an education that transforms the lives of individual students and that prepares them for leadership roles as socially engaged artists, publishers and writers, chaplains, counselors, and environmental change agents, among other fields. We are especially committed to an exploration of diversity (including religious pluralism) and environmental sustainability, and as a result, we provide an education that balances contemplative and academic work with applied experiences.
Criterion One
Mission and Integrity

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Naropa University Mission Statement

Inspired by the rich intellectual and experiential traditions of East and West, Naropa University is North America’s leading institution of contemplative education.

Naropa recognizes the inherent goodness and wisdom of each human being. It educates the whole person, cultivating academic excellence and contemplative insight in order to infuse knowledge with wisdom. The university nurtures in its students a lifelong joy in learning, a critical intellect, the sense of purpose that accompanies compassionate service to the world, and the openness and equanimity that arise from authentic insight and self-understanding. Ultimately, Naropa students explore the inner resources needed to engage courageously with a complex and challenging world, to help transform that world through skill and compassion, and to attain deeper levels of happiness and meaning in their lives.

Drawing on the vital insights of the world’s wisdom traditions, the university is simultaneously Buddhist-inspired, ecumenical and nonsectarian. Naropa values ethnic and cultural differences for their essential role in education. It embraces the richness of human diversity with the aim of fostering a more just and equitable society and an expanded awareness of our common humanity.

A Naropa education—reflecting the interplay of discipline and delight—prepares its graduates both to meet the world as it is and to change it for the better.
The Naropa University Mission Statement articulates our vision of education and the aspirations for the outcomes of a Naropa education. In addition, it guides the University’s teaching, engagement, and other practices. As the University prepared for a comprehensive strategic planning process in 2005, we recognized the need for a more succinct and widely accessible Mission Statement as a first, foundational step. Following a two-year review process directed by the Board of Trustees and involving senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students, the Board approved a substantially revised Mission Statement in 2007 (RR, MD-1). This revision did not seek to change the mission per se but rather aimed to make it more focused, concise, and useful. It was also designed to provide a foundation for other mission and planning documents. Recognizing the central importance of this document to the life and functioning of the University, both the highly interactive process resulting in the new Mission Statement and the statement itself stand as a public proclamation of our shared values, aims, and methods (RR, MD-6–8).

Seven underlying core themes in the Mission Statement inform and guide Naropa’s other mission and planning documents. These are:
1. Naropa University’s preeminent role in contemplative education;
2. Our view of human beings as inherently good;
3. Our view of students as whole persons and lifelong learners;
4. The interplay of inner development and engagement with the world;
5. The simultaneous valuing of Naropa’s Buddhist heritage and other religious and spiritual traditions;
6. The value of diversity, justice, and equity;
7. The impact of a Naropa education not only on students but also on bettering the world’s condition.

CORE COMPONENT 1A – The organization’s mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization’s commitments.

Development, Integration, and Evaluation of Mission Documents

The Mission Statement articulates a set of discernible educational commitments, which give direction to the University’s activities both in the classroom and in administrative contexts. Since its adoption by the Board, the Mission Statement has sparked the development of other institution-wide aspirational and planning documents and has supported the articulation of unit-specific mission documents by academic departments, administrative offices, and governance committees. These efforts led directly to the strategic planning process out of which a Statement of Distinctiveness (RR, MD-3), comprehensive Academic Plan (RR, AA-1), Enrollment Management Plan (RR, AA-36), and a brand articulation initiative (RR, MC-4) were developed.

The Board of Trustees adopted the Statement of Distinctiveness in May 2009 (RR, MD-3). Arising from the strategic planning process, it provides a succinct articulation of Naropa’s distinctiveness and clarifies central aspects of a Naropa University education for the twenty-first century. Among these are the interplay between inner transformation of the student and outer transformation of the world, as well as Naropa University’s aspiration to blend its Buddhist heritage with perspectives of the world’s other spiritual and wisdom traditions. This statement was written by the Board of Trustees in collaboration with then-President Thomas Coburn, the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculty, and Dean of Admissions. Intended to be more specific than the Mission Statement, the Statement of Distinctiveness is meant to further guide the Academic Plan, the Enrollment Management Plan, and the brand articulation initiative.

Part I of the Academic Plan includes an Educational Vision Statement that was developed by faculty in collaboration with the Office of Academic Affairs (RR, AA-1, p. 18). This statement extends the University’s mission to a succinct declaration of the path and purpose of a Naropa education and in turn informs the curricular arc described in the Academic Plan. The Educational Vision Statement leads directly to the articulation of six learning outcomes and competencies determined by the faculty to be “hallmarks of a Naropa education.” The statement and derived learning outcomes are further expressions of the University’s mission.

Part II of the Academic Plan details the Enrollment Management Plan (RR, AA-36). This plan is an important outgrowth of the Strategic Plan and thus is tied closely to the mission. The Strategic Plan calls for Naropa University to grow its student enrollments while maintaining coherence with its educational commitments and values. Based on collaboration between Academic Affairs, Chairs
Council, and the Enrollment Management Team (composed of the Dean of Admissions, Dean of Students, and Assistant Vice President for Student Administrative Services) and drawing upon data from a variety of sources, the Enrollment Management Plan calls for a combination of improved retention, increased enrollment in targeted programs, and the development of new degree programs.

Retention efforts are closely tied to delivering an education based explicitly on the Mission Statement and guided by Part I of the Academic Plan. At the undergraduate level, the Academic Plan and Enrollment Management Plan call for clearer articulation of the nature and goals of Naropa's approach to contemplative education. In addition, a focused retention effort on the part of the Office of Undergraduate Education is seen as a crucial complement to any curricular changes and clarification that might occur. At the graduate level, the two planning documents call for ensuring that existing offerings are aligned with the mission and learning outcomes and that new programs are developed with the mission and learning outcomes firmly in mind.

The Strategic Plan also provides the impetus for the brand articulation effort, a collaboration across Academic Affairs, Office of Admissions, and Marketing and Communications (MarCom) to “clearly define Naropa’s distinctiveness and what it delivers” (RR, MC-4; see also SP-14, action items I. b., c., and d). The public declaration of our institutional vision and core values will also support institutional efforts to attract more students who resonate with what Naropa offers. To ensure that our history, mission, and culture resonate truthfully and authentically through the brand, MarCom chose to initiate this process from within the University. Rather than hiring an outside agency to direct this effort, the newly appointed Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications initiated an internal process in fall 2009 to work with the messaging, image, and distinctive assets that already exist at the institution. This multiyear program is designed to ensure clear communication about a Naropa education, alignment with key themes found in our Mission Statement, and strategic adoption of various media in marketing the University to potential students, donors, and community members.

In brief, a variety of operational and planning documents have been written with a close eye to expressing and giving path to the guiding principles of the Mission Statement. These can be considered mission documents inasmuch as they serve as direct articulations of the University’s mission and provide guidance for subsequent strategies taken by the University and outcomes sought. Other initiatives currently underway—such as the commissioning of a Campus Master Plan, the preliminary needs assessment established by the Technology Working Group, and an analysis of faculty salary equity—are similarly directed by the Mission Statement and the Strategic Plan. See the Criterion 2 chapter for a detailed discussion of the Strategic Plan and the Enrollment Management Plan and the Criteria 3 and 4 chapters for discussion of the Academic Plan.

Availability of the Mission Statement

The dissemination of the aforementioned documents is mixed. Naropa’s Mission Statement is sufficiently available to the University’s internal and external constituencies, whereas distribution of other mission documents is not as robust. The University’s website (www.naropa.edu) makes available the Mission Statement, and related pages expand on central elements of it, including descriptions of contemplative education and our commitment to diversity. In addition, the Mission Statement is available in the course catalog (RR, HB-5); in student, faculty, and staff handbooks (RR, HB-1, 2, and 3); and in new student and employee orientation materials (RR, SAF 18 and 19, HR-7). We also post the Mission Statement in each of the four teaching sites, including London.

In contrast, other mission documents are not as available or well known by faculty and staff. The Statement of Distinctiveness, which is intended primarily to guide the work of faculty and staff rather than be read by the general public, only appears on the University’s internal website, Eropa (eropa.naropa.edu/staff/pres). Departmental mission and vision statements are typically imbedded in departmental planning and analysis documents or, in the case of academic departments, in descriptions in the Course Catalog and admissions documents. These departmental mission statements tend to be limited in availability. Administrative and service units’ mission and vision statements are somewhat more visible within the units, but not outside (RR, MD-5).

To summarize issues around the availability of mission documents, it is fair to say that the University’s Mission Statement has been widely disseminated, but that this is not the case for statements articulated by individual academic departments and administrative units and committees. The self-study has drawn
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attention to the need for the University to clarify which levels of the institution are expected to articulate a unit-specific mission and the means for making such documents more visible and available to our various constituencies.

CORE COMPONENT 1B – In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.

Mission Documents and Diversity

Of the various commitments and values that undergird Naropa as an educational institution and employer, diversity in our programming and among students, faculty, and staff is a priority. The Mission Statement takes a strong stance on the value of diversity and its relationship to contemplative education: “Naropa University embraces the richness of human diversity with the aim of fostering a more just and equitable society and an expanded awareness of our common humanity.”

In a world where the facts and frameworks of diversity and difference are so often fractious and contentious, Naropa’s emphasis on deep and disciplined listening—a central foundation of contemplative education—offers an important alternative. When integrated with intellectual understanding; critical and creative inquiry into social, economic, and political issues; and cultivation of the capacity to encounter others in a spirit of nonreactive presence, such deep listening helps prepare our students to serve the world as agents of reconciliation. The intermixing of informed observation and critique, unbiased and compassionate witnessing, and self-awareness are all hallmarks of contemplative education and provide a basis of bravery for living and working in a world of difference.

In addition, the University explicitly recognizes the diversity of our students and other stakeholders through the Statement of Distinctiveness, as well as other articulations of our mission through the website, Course Catalog, employee and student handbooks, and the University Code of Conduct (RR, OTH-2). This recognition and its multiple expressions are coordinated by the Senior Diversity Officer, who reports directly to the President, and are implemented by various departments and academic units. The Senior Diversity Officer, working with others at the University, produces and maintains a widely available brochure reflecting our commitment to, and views of, diversity across campus (RR, AA-38). Finally, the annual Department Systematic Review (see Criteria 2 and 3) ensures that academic departments continuously review and renew their alignment with and implementation of the University’s diversity commitment.

Diversity: An Inclusive View and Multiple Resources

Naropa’s recognition and valuing of diversity encompasses multiple dimensions of human difference, including race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and religion or spiritual expression. The University is organized in ways that enable us to manifest and fulfill our commitment to diversity, though as described below, there are clearly areas in need of greater attention and improvement. First, the holistic manner in which the University evaluates and reviews application materials for admission reflects our recognition that students learn in many different ways and that students experience a developmental process, which may have resulted in academic failure earlier in their careers but may prepare them for later success. Consistent with this view, standardized admissions tests (e.g., GRE, SAT, and ACT) are not required for admission to the University because these may emphasize a limited set of skills and intelligences. Instead, the Office of Admissions has established a comprehensive set of criteria, which include academic preparedness as evidenced by transcripts as well as a narrative essay, emotional readiness, and connection to our contemplative mission. For many graduate programs, face-to-face interviews play an important part of the evaluation process.

A second manifestation of the University’s commitment to diversity can be seen in the allocation of staff resources to this area. Recognizing the importance of backing up Naropa’s valuing of diversity with key employees, the University created the position of Senior Diversity Officer in 2005. This position is currently held by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, reports directly to the President, and sits on Senior Staff (the President’s cabinet and highest advisory and decision-making body). The Senior Diversity Officer is charged with broad oversight of the University’s diversity initiatives, including the establishment of a framework for curriculum development, assessment of diversity issues in student learning, support for student programming and services, and faculty and staff training.

In addition, the Office of Student Affairs houses two diversity-related positions: the Student Life Diversity Coordinator and the Assistant Dean of Students, who serves as the University’s LGBTQIA1 Student Advocate. The Assistant Direc-

1 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Allies.
tor of Admissions also serves as Multicultural Recruitment Coordinator. Naropa’s Multicultural Resource Center, El Centro de la Gente, brings together undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni, with the goal of creating a safe space to ease the stress experienced by traditionally underrepresented populations by providing resources, information, and support. El Centro hosts many events throughout the year and aims to create allies by educating and informing people of the importance of understanding all systems of oppression in order to increase advocacy for social change (www.naropa.edu/studentlife/di_el_centro.cfm).

Student Affairs programming frequently includes forums, Town Hall meetings, seminars, presentations, and fairs designed to bring different campus constituencies together for sharing of cultural heritages, discussion, learning opportunities, and resources (such as the annual Cultural Fair or the annual Pride Week Celebration). Naropa also offers a wide variety of opportunities for students to become involved in student organizations—many of which are focused around diversity and support for its expression, such as Allies in Action or Students of Color Advocacy and Support Group—and to network with others with similar interests and needs.

Third, recognition of the diversity of our students and employees, as well as of the world for which our students are being educated to serve, permeates the various planning documents resulting from the adoption of the new Mission Statement. The University’s strategic planning process and resulting documents incorporated many specific references to diversity. Early in the development of the process leading to the creation of the Strategic Plan, the Board and senior management identified diversity issues as central to our planning. Seven of the eleven Action Groups, which were part of the first phase of strategic planning, were explicitly charged with increasing and improving diversity (eropa.naropa.edu/staff/strategic/ElevenStrategicPlanningActionCommittees.asp).

The final, Board-approved Strategic Plan calls for “a plan to increase diversity among students with special emphasis on historically underrepresented ethnic groups” (RR, SP-2, Action Step II.e.e). In addition, diversity is foundational to the Strategic Plan’s call to strengthen the Naropa curriculum by “incorporat[ing] diverse perspectives and cultures” in students’ educational experiences (RR, SP-2, Action Step IV.d). In order to accomplish these two goals, the plan calls for efforts “to increase diversity among faculty and to strengthen both curricular and cocurricular education” (at both undergraduate and graduate levels), and “to incorporate or infuse diversity issues, topics, and perspectives” into courses and majors.

Among the activities identified for accomplishing the latter goal are the inclusion of diversity issues in the annual Department Systematic Review process (see Criteria 2 and 3), the building of a teaching resource website that includes information on best practices for teaching diversity, and the development of opportunities for students to engage with local and international communities through “study away” programs (RR, SP-2, Action Step IV.d). A few of these action steps (such as the analysis of diversity in Department Systematic Reviews) have been accomplished, and others will unfold over the next few years. In preparation for the aforementioned website, Academic Affairs initiated a faculty development seminar in fall 2009 by bringing two internationally known trainers to campus, and in spring 2010 is scheduled to fund faculty research grants that integrate diversity topics in discipline-based courses. Developing a model for study abroad is included in the budget proposal prepared by Academic Affairs for investments in the implementation of the Academic Plan.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Academic Plan completed and endorsed by the full faculty in spring 2009 recognizes the diversity of the University’s learners and calls for education about diversity in the University’s goals and learning outcomes. The Educational Vision Statement developed by faculty as the foundation for the Academic Plan cites “a commitment to diversity” (RR, AA-1, p. 18), and diversity is central to three of the six learning outcomes of a Naropa education. The developmental view of the Academic Plan’s curriculum arc calls for the required COR 150: Diversity Seminar to be seen as a crucial first step in helping students through a sequence of additional courses and cocurricular learning experiences in support of their attainment of diversity learning outcomes.

Fourth, the University’s attention to religious diversity is noteworthy. Although Naropa values its roots in Tibetan Buddhism, the Mission Statement expresses an ecumenical and nonsectarian view. Indeed, as cited by the Academic Plan, the intention of the University’s founder was not necessarily to create a narrowly Buddhist institution but rather to borrow the contemplative insights and practices derived from Buddhism in the service of a broader educational aim (RR, AA-1). Further, from the very beginnings of the Naropa Institute, religious leaders from across the spectrum were invited to teach, develop a comprehensive view of contemplative education, and build the University’s future. What has emerged is
a common perspective that is expressed in our openness to “immediate” or “present” experience informed by mindfulness, critical reflection, compassion, and sincere engagement.

The Contemplative Practices Office is one institutional structure that ensures adherence to and implementation of this ecumenical view. The Contemplative Practices Coordinator organizes Community Practice Day and a series of interfaith dialogues throughout the academic year. Community Practice Day is a day each semester when no classes are scheduled and students, faculty, and staff jointly participate in such contemplative activities as sitting and walking meditation, Christian centering prayer, Sufi dancing, and Japanese tea ceremony. This is a day for quieting the mind through a variety of the world’s spiritual practices. Both Practice Day and the Interfaith Dialogues have featured invited speakers from a variety of religious and spiritual traditions, including programs in Christianity, Judaism, Earth-centered spirituality, insight meditation, aikido, labyrinths, laughter yoga, Zen, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, and Authentic Movement, among others (RR, CP 1–6).

The October 2009 presidential inauguration gives further evidence of the importance of inclusive ritual to Naropa (www.naropa.edu/inauguration). Following extensive planning by a group of staff and faculty, the inauguration extended over three days and included an interreligious dialogue on spiritual practice and social engagement with highly respected Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian speakers; a “Day of Service and Learning” led by President Lord; and the inauguration ceremony itself. The ceremony featured many different traditions, including an opening prayer recited by a rabbi, a Catholic benediction, singing by a gospel choir and Native American elders, and readings from the Quran. The Sakyong, Jamgon Mipham, Rinpoche, head of the Shambhala Buddhist lineage and Naropa University’s lineage holder, along with the chair of the Board of Trustees, who was a student of the University’s founder, formally conferred the presidency.

Finally, two other expressions of Naropa’s recognition of the value of diversity are visible in the University’s Cultural Appropriation Statement and Hate Crime Statement (www.naropa.edu/studentlife/di_commitment.cfm). The former arose from our recognition that exploration of a variety of traditions can sometimes lead to casual or inappropriate use of other cultures’ spiritual and religious practices and texts. Even when it is unintentional, such cultural and religious appropriation can be hurtful and is inconsistent with the respectful view of diversity embedded in Naropa’s mission. In another vein, the University has taken a strong stance against hate crimes. Formal statements from the President and the Board assert the value that our community places on diversity and reinforce Naropa’s active respect for difference.

Given the importance of diversity to our students as well as its central place in our mission, the above efforts seem reasonable. Further, data collected through a variety of instruments provide evidence that, for the most part, the University’s efforts to articulate and live a commitment to diversity are successful. A 2008 survey of graduate students (n=420) shows that 78.7 percent of respondents feel that support for diversity concerns is somewhat important or very important, and 73.3 percent feel that the University’s diversity initiatives are somewhat or very important. Among those who say these concerns are important, there is a high level of satisfaction with University actions. With regard to support for diversity concerns, 73.6 percent of these survey respondents report satisfaction; with regard to specific diversity initiatives, 73.3 percent indicate satisfaction (RR, SAS-10).

Further evidence that students feel diversity is supported at Naropa comes from the 2008 Mission Perception Inventory of the National Survey of Student Engagement conducted by the Council of Independent Colleges, of which Naropa is a member. Five questions relating to “Respect for Diversity” measure how well students feel their university accepts and respects diversity of religion, race, culture, and sexual orientation. Naropa’s first-year undergraduate students scored second highest out of fourteen comparison institutions on these measures, and our seniors scored fourth out of fourteen (RR, MD-12).

In five-year comparisons, however, students report much less satisfaction with the diversity of the community and with diversity initiatives being put forth by the University (RR, SAS-9). In 2006, the last year for which data are available, only 18.5 percent of Naropa’s undergraduates reported satisfaction with the diversity of the community, down from 28.7 percent in 2003. Similarly, only 26.4 percent reported satisfaction with the University’s diversity initiatives, down from 51.2 percent in 2003. Data from graduate students are somewhat more positive, showing upward trends in satisfaction from 2003 to 2006. It is likely that some of the drops found in undergraduate satisfaction with diversity are due to students’ higher expectations, especially as the latter are influenced by a reading of our Mission Statement, admissions materials, and other publications. Whereas there has been a modest increase in the diversity of the teaching faculty (see Criterion 3), anecdotal and survey data indicate room for significant improvement in the inclusion of the world’s religious and spiritual traditions in the formal curriculum. This is acknowledged in the Academic Plan, which calls for greater representation of diversity in curriculum planning and learning outcomes.
Criterion One

Also, although Naropa has made great strides in articulating and expressing a broad definition of contemplative practice and demonstrating respect for multiple religious traditions, anecdotal evidence suggests that some community members continue to feel the Buddhist-inspired aspect of Naropa is more clearly evident than other world wisdom traditions and at times feel marginalized. At the same time, others feel Buddhist traditions are not represented enough at Naropa given their importance to the history and founding of the University. Valuing an ongoing dialogue, this creative tension is consistent with our mission, and we seek opportunities to engage in these explorations.

A final area of concern and future attention targets the somewhat inchoate recognition of the diversity of the University’s external constituencies. Although Naropa values engagement with diverse external communities, we have not made an explicit priority of reaching out to them. Although there are some important examples of such engagement, such as the fall 2009 hosting of the Iranian Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi and the offering of discounted tickets to the general public, we have not developed a well-articulated recognition or mechanism for serving the diversity of Boulder and neighboring townships. Neither has the University developed means for assessing and improving our engagement with diverse communities. Recently inaugurated President Stuart Lord’s call for a stronger university-wide orientation to service and to international service learning will likely require and result in a clearer recognition of the diversity of our external constituencies and more decisive outreach initiatives.

CORE COMPONENT 1C – Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.

Both in the actions undertaken by members of the institution and by data collected specifically for this self-study, there is reasonable cause to believe in the pervasiveness of Naropa’s Mission Statement. More specifically, there is widespread awareness and understanding of contemplative education among faculty, staff, and trustees, as well as strong belief among Naropa’s internal constituents that their work supports the mission and is guided and nurtured by the mission. In spring 2009, the Self-Study Steering Committee surveyed faculty, staff, and trustees regarding their relationship to the University’s mission. Trustees and Ranked Faculty express an exceptionally strong relationship with Naropa’s mission. Adjunct Faculty and nonteaching staff also express a high level of awareness, understanding, and support for the mission. Tables 1.1 through 1.4 present evidence for these conclusions.

### Table 1.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am aware of Naropa University’s mission as an institution of contemplative education. (All respondents, N=105)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree somewhat</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I understand Naropa’s mission to “educate the whole person and cultivate academic excellence and contemplative insight in order to infuse knowledge with wisdom.” (All respondents, N=105)</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree somewhat</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.3. Naropa’s mission guides and nurtures my work here. (All respondents, N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4. My work at Naropa supports its mission to “educate the whole person.” (All respondents, N=104)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data are gratifying given various efforts on the part of the University to ensure shared understanding of our mission. The University recognizes the ongoing need for training and development of new Board members, Ranked Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, and staff with regard to Naropa’s mission and culture. Detailed descriptions of the history, background, and orientation of the University are available in the Employee Handbook (RR, HB-2), and briefer descriptions are included in the Course Catalog and the website (RR, HB-5 and www.naropa.edu/about). One manifestation of the training accorded new employees (as well as students) occurs in the orientation to the bow, a gesture typically performed at the beginning and ending of small group discussions, classroom sessions, and most meetings.

The Bow at Naropa

Many Naropa meetings, classes, and community gatherings begin and end with a brief bow. Brought to Naropa University by its founder, Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, this simple gesture has become infused into Naropa’s culture as a communal practice embodying our mission to “recognize the inherent goodness and wisdom of each human being.” Completely voluntary and nonreligious in nature, such a bow is designed as a transition from one activity to another and as an invitation to greater mindfulness, encouraging participants to direct their attention away from the ideas, emotions, and experiences of the previous event and toward present-centeredness and connection in the current moment. This practice reinforces a tone of mutual respect and openness and a sense of entering the present moment fully with awareness, courage, and compassion. It evokes a deeper contemplative foundation for our work together, in the classroom, in meetings, and beyond. For a more thorough description of this practice, please see www.naropa.edu/about/bow.cfm.

In order to promote a strong, well-informed relationship with the Mission Statement among employees and students, Naropa provides opportunities for personal and professional development consistent with our mission and holds a number of relevant university-wide gatherings each year. With the support of a number of staff and faculty, the Office of Human Resources has developed and offers a three-part new employee orientation (RR, HR 7–9). This orientation covers Naropa’s history, mission, and educational orientation, as well as policies, procedures, and employee benefits. As in the orientation for new students, Human Resources ensures that employees are aware of the value of contemplative practice and are exposed to those practices likely to be encountered in their work.

The University also sponsors opportunities throughout the year for faculty and staff to learn and engage in contemplative practices, including meditation instruction and the availability of meditation rooms on each of the Boulder teaching sites for individual and group practice. Community-wide programs include Convocation at the beginning of each academic year, the annual State of the University address by the President, the previously mentioned Community Practice Day held each semester, the Shambhala Day celebration of the Tibetan New Year, and fall and spring graduation ceremonies. These programs introduce and reinforce
the contemplative culture and mission at Naropa for new and current students, faculty, staff, board members, and members of the greater community who are invited to attend (RR, CP-6).

Perhaps more than most institutions, many current faculty and staff are alumni who have returned out of allegiance to the University’s mission. Even though we recognize the risks of insularity, we feel this helps reinforce the pervasiveness of the University’s mission. (See the chapter on Criterion 3 for a discussion of recent hiring practices designed to widen the backgrounds and experiences of the Ranked Faculty.) Knowing Naropa’s contemplative education mission as both student and employee supports a deeper, more authentic acceptance and a broader, richer expression of our mission. It is evidence of a deep commitment to this mission that former students choose to return to the University and support it as employees.

Nevertheless, we recognize the need for actions that increase awareness and understanding of the mission, especially among Adjunct Faculty and staff. Although some of Naropa’s Adjunct Faculty have taught for many years and are highly aligned with the mission, others are relatively new to the University. Adjunct Professors (long-term adjuncts who have taught a total of at least 72 credit hours) and Senior Adjunct Faculty members (who have accumulated between 36 and 71 credit hours) make up only 23 percent of the adjunct population, whereas those with the least number of credits taught make up 61 percent of all Adjunct Faculty. In 2008, the Office of Academic Affairs initiated an orientation program for new and continuing adjuncts that encourages networking among Adjunct and the Ranked Faculty in their departments and provides an introduction to the many issues they will face in their classrooms (including how to handle diversity, integrate their contemplative practice with their teaching, and assist with student retention).

**Naropa’s Mission in the Classroom**

Naropa’s view of contemplative education is central to its mission and to the learning experiences provided to students and outcomes expected of students. However, the last three years of planning (first for the Strategic Plan, and then for the Academic Plan) have forced recognition that more needs to be done to define the philosophy and pedagogical practices associated with contemplative education. This is perhaps not surprising as the University has expanded its curricular offerings, has mounted a concerted effort to attract faculty from a variety of academic and contemplative backgrounds, and has begun to interact more with other institutions with a similar mission.2

Drawing upon data from students, alumni, and external constituencies, the Strategic Plan calls for a clearer, stronger, and more coherent implementation of the mission in the University’s curriculum. The data analysis and strategic planning process led to a recognition that faculty approaches to contemplative education are diverse, and that whereas a strict orthodoxy is neither desirable nor feasible, the differences across pedagogical practices lead to some confusion among students. To address this issue, the Ranked Faculty engaged in a yearlong process to establish learning outcomes and the curricular arc that define a Naropa education. This work forms the foundation of the Academic Plan and guides the work of the Undergraduate Oversight Committee and the graduate members of the Chairs Council in curriculum revitalization (RR, AA-1).

As noted, the Academic Plan summarizes student surveys on the contemplative dimensions of a Naropa education. Although quantitative data show a high degree of satisfaction among both undergraduate and graduate students with the contemplative dimensions of their Naropa education, some of the qualitative data indicate a lack of a clear understanding of how contemplative and academic work are to be integrated (RR AA-1, pp. 10–11, 14). Steps being taken to enhance faculty’s involvement in fostering the desired understanding include the following:

- Articulating the role of contemplative practice and contemplative pedagogy in the Academic Plan and student learning outcomes (RR, AA-1, AP, Section 4, “Context”);
- Renaming the Core Curriculum’s Contemplative Practice Seminar as the Contemplative Learning Seminar, bringing the course’s name in alignment with its goals and curriculum, which go beyond contemplative practice in a narrow sense, to other aspects of contemplative education;
- Researching through focus groups and interviews (conducted by Susan Burggraf, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and faculty member) Naropa faculty members’ understanding of contemplative pedagogy (RR, OTH-6);
- Publishing a book by Naropa faculty members, edited by Naropa faculty members Judith Simmer-Brown and Richard Brown, on contemplative education in college classrooms (RR, OTH-4 and 5),

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2 Under the leadership of former President Thomas Coburn, faculty and senior administrators have interacted with and participated in the programming of the following organizations: Brown University’s Contemplative Studies Initiative, California Institute of Integral Studies, Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, the Fetzer Institute, and the Garrison Institute.
To better understand and embody the University’s view of contemplative education, the faculty has been engaged for the past several years in deliberate dialogue about the relationships between and among three concepts: contemplative education, contemplative practice, and contemplative pedagogy (and in the case of staff, contemplative administration). Throughout its history, Naropa has held meditation and other contemplative practices as foundational to our unique educational approach and our mission. However, the links between different contemplative activities and their integration into pedagogy have only recently begun to be explored and articulated.

It is our contention that meditation practice can strengthen one’s capacities for open-minded, creative, and critical examination of premises, evidence, and experience; deepen listening skills that are at the heart of learning; increase capacities to embody openness to new perspectives; and transform the relationship between the student and the world. Admittedly, these connections between practice and the classroom can sometimes be superficial or tenuous, none of which is our view of contemplative education. For example, a class that begins with a few minutes of silent sitting and then does not connect this experience to the subsequent lecture and discussion is not, in our view, contemplative pedagogy. To the extent that contemplative practice contributes to, and is integrated with, academic content or disciplinary methods and bodies of knowledge, the University’s mission is served.

The call delineated in the Strategic Plan for clarification of these issues represents an emerging impulse to codify a largely oral and experiential culture, and to do so because many of the founding faculty members anticipate retirement. The difficulty of this task rests on the vitality and diversity of Naropa’s living culture. Further, some members of the institution express wariness that attempts to reduce some essential components of contemplative education could have the effect of making it “smaller” and formulaic.

Despite these hesitations, recent projects demonstrate the increasing attention being paid to the institution’s maturing articulation of contemplative education. First, faculty members increasingly publish and present papers related to the role of contemplative practice in higher education as well as the contributions of contemplative pedagogy to the teaching of various liberal arts fields (see RR, AA-61 for examples).

Second, to support and express our mission, the University established the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE) in 2005. CACE’s goal is to develop the field of contemplative higher education by (1) stimulating research about its theory and methods; (2) conducting outcomes assessment of curricula taught from within a contemplative pedagogy; and (3) exploring the contribution that contemplative pedagogy can make to pressing societal issues, including matters of diversity and inclusiveness. In addition, CACE has turned Naropa into a beacon for contemplative education, generating opportunities for collaboration and learning both among Naropa faculty and across diverse campuses and disciplines outside Naropa. CACE sponsors a summer workshop, the Contemplative Pedagogy Seminar, which attracts faculty from the international academic community. One benefit for Naropa is the time allowed to the host faculty members to prepare for the workshop, learn from their colleagues, and enhance their shared view of contemplative education. Such is also the case for the faculty who mentor the Fredrick P. Lenz Foundation Residential Fellows, a program begun in fall 2008. Both initiatives allow Naropa faculty to influence pedagogical and scholarly practices at other institutions and to engage with colleagues in a rich reflection and exploration of contemplative education.

Other efforts have been undertaken by the University to ensure awareness and adoption of Naropa’s core mission. In an effort to integrate the University’s Mission Statement with unit goals, the Department Systematic Review (DSR) asks each academic department to articulate departmental vision and goal statements that are linked to the University’s mission. A 2007–2008 review by Academic Affairs determined that 66 percent of academic departments had vision and goal statements as part of their completion of a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis template. For 61 percent of the departments, goals and objectives were determined to be correlated with the University mission; for 50 percent, the goals and objectives appeared to be fully integrated with the mission. Similarly, the 2008–2009 meta-analysis of departmental assessment plans determined that 65 percent had either “excellent” or “good” correlations between learning goals and outcomes and the University mission (RR, DSR folders. See Criterion 2, footnote 4).

However, a cautionary note about these data is in order. Academic Affairs acknowledges that in many cases, chairs and administrative directors (support staff
to the chair and faculty) take primary responsibility for generating department mission documents and the SWOT analyses used in the DSR. Thus, statements of vision, purpose, and/or goals have not in all cases been vetted by the full faculty in the department.

### Naropa’s Mission Among Students

From the student perspective, there appears to be strong agreement with the University’s contemplative education mission and satisfaction with its expression. The 2008 Mission Perception Inventory surveyed first-year and senior students’ sense of our mission. Of 14 benchmark institutions participating in the survey, both groups of Naropa students ranked first on the “Sense of Mission” subscale and first (for seniors) and second (for first-year students) on the overall scale (RR, MD-9).

Our own student surveys measure satisfaction with the contemplative aspects of Naropa’s education, though as noted above, some qualitative data suggest a lack of consensus on what constitutes contemplative education. Data from 2008, the first year we asked this question of undergraduate students, show that 80.5 percent of undergraduates are satisfied with the contemplative aspects of their overall education, 81.8 percent are satisfied with these aspects of their individual classes, and 78.8 percent are satisfied with these aspects of their major. We have collected similar data for graduate students since 2003. Here, we see a rising trend, from 53.1 percent reporting satisfaction in 2003 to 86.9 percent reporting satisfaction in 2008. Clearly, Naropa students care about the University’s mission and are satisfied with its expression in their education (RR, SAS-8 and SAS-9).

Generally, students judge Naropa’s marketing messages, values, and actuality to be congruent with the University’s mission. The 2008 undergraduate student satisfaction survey shows 63.5 percent of undergraduate students are satisfied or very satisfied with the way admissions counselors portray Naropa, and 61 percent are satisfied or very satisfied that print and electronic materials accurately portray the University (RR, SAS-31). Graduate students appear more satisfied with how Naropa is depicted, with 75.6 percent expressing satisfaction with admissions counselors’ portrayals and 67.7 percent expressing satisfaction with print and electronic portrayals (RR, SAS-10).

At the same time, students have drawn attention to incongruencies between the University’s mission and the actualities of the curriculum and campus climate. These perceptions are not easily found in the quantitative data collected by the University but instead emerge through careful attention to informal complaints that arise in classes (especially around religious pluralism), reasons given by some students for leaving the University, and periodic discussions among the student leaders of United Naropa. The Criterion 3 chapter describes various institutional responses to the assessment data on these issues.

### Naropa’s Mission Among Administrative Staff

In addition to its instructional activities, the University has sought to bring a contemplative orientation to its administrative functions. These efforts seek to extend the mission into the multiple operational levels of the University, and although progress has been made in this regard, it is not yet complete. Most administrative units have their own mission documents and statements of vision, purpose, or goals. Every Board committee and faculty committee has similarly developed mission statements or charges, although many are in need of revision or updating (RR, MD-5). However, no systematic, institution-wide methodology has been developed to assess how well the mission documents of administrative units and committees align with the University’s Mission Statement or how accurately they reflect actual functions. The self-study revealed that many committee mission documents need updating.

In 2001, then-President John Cobb created an ad hoc group to address the concept of contemplative administration and charged the group with examining historical documents and creating a guiding statement that the University's staff could adopt. The ad hoc group, made up of staff from both academic and administrative units, worked for almost a year researching archival materials, conducting focus groups, and revising drafts. The group presented a draft to the Board of Trustees and the President on Shambhala Day 2002 and refined it further throughout 2003 (RR, HR-13).

It had been anticipated that this first phase of work, the articulation of a vision for contemplative administration, would be followed by a second phase, the conduct of a cultural audit. However, the arrival of a new president in 2003, and the beginnings of attention being placed on strategic planning, halted further developments. The Contemplative Administration Statement appears in the employment section of the University’s website (www.naropa.edu/employment/contadmin.cfm). With the transition to Dr. Stuart Lord’s presidency in July 2009, members of the community have requested that the University revive and update this document and use it for staff training and reviews.
An earlier but related development, a report by the Staff Executive Committee, “Looking Toward a Sustainable Naropa Work Culture: A Review of Naropa Work Culture, 2006.” cited a lack of connection to Naropa’s mission as first among issues negatively impacting morale and job satisfaction among staff (RR, OTH-11). As noted above, a number of activities were undertaken to respond to this gap, including a revised new employee orientation and an ongoing training program. The present self-study has identified this as an important area for the University to continue to address, and as it has been three years since the original report, it may be timely to conduct a new review.

CORE COMPONENT 1D – The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.

The University’s governance and administrative structures have matured during the past ten years, and new structures have been put into place in response to ever-emergent University needs. The University’s organizational chart (RR, HR-16) shows a listing of the University’s primary management, governance, and administrative structures. The by-laws of the Board of Trustees, combined with the Faculty Handbook (currently undergoing a significant revision), Student Handbook, and Employee Handbook, serve to delineate the formal structures and reporting lines at the University. At the same time, the University is sensitive to changing circumstances and endeavors to adapt its structures to these changes. For example, in the last two years, the Office of Academic Affairs established a task force to examine salary equity among the Ranked Faculty, and the President modified the composition of the University Budget Committee to take on a budget reduction initiative announced to the Naropa and Boulder communities in December 2009. A further example of structural adaptation is the strategic planning process, which included the creation of multiple Action Groups comprised of faculty, staff, and students. The expansive work done by the Action Groups was consolidated by a steering committee and an external consultant and eventually produced the Strategic Plan endorsed by the Board of Trustees in fall 2008. Naropa’s culture promotes inclusivity and openness to all perspectives; further, it values transparency in communication and decision-making in order to fulfill the aspirations expressed in the Mission Statement. Although the University announced the budget reduction initiative via an e-mail memorandum, Town Hall meeting, and press release on December 7, 2009. At the time of this writing, the campus is beginning to organize around this initiative. (See Criterion 2 for an analysis of Naropa’s financial picture.)

At the same time, members of the Naropa community note a sense of confusion around where decisions are made and where decision-making authority resides. In some cases, perceptions are unclear as to which University bodies are charged with making recommendations and which with decisions. In the interest of providing opportunities for inclusive deliberations on key institutional directions, the sequencing of input and decision-making has not been adequately communicated.

A good example of this misperception can be seen in recent deliberations around a new health insurance provider. In mid-fall 2009, the Director of Human Resources learned that the University’s insurance carrier would be increasing premiums significantly, and under a charge from the President, organized a Benefits Committee to review options. During the course of the committee’s study, at least four insurance companies presented bids, and the Naropa community was invited to participate in meetings to discuss and become informed about the options being explored. At the end of each meeting, attendees were asked to express a preference through an anonymous ballot. Subsequent to these meetings, the Benefits Committee and then the Senior Staff made a recommendation for a particular carrier to the President, who then forwarded the recommendation to the Trustees’ Budget and Finance Committee. Exercising its fiduciary responsibility, the committee chose not to bring the recommendation forward to the full Board and instead requested a more cost-effective alternative. The Benefits Committee, Senior Staff, and President eventually submitted a proposal for a less costly option.

During the period between the submission of the first and final recommendations, many faculty and staff members expressed outrage that their selection had not been honored. Given the sensitive nature of health issues, on the national as well as local levels, it is perhaps not surprising that the Board’s initial decision met with this reaction. However, it is also true that the nature and purpose of the Town Hall meetings, as well as the decision-tree for this particular issue, had not been clearly communicated to University constituencies. Attendees of the Town
Hall meetings believed that they were voting for health insurance, whereas it was actually a straw poll that was conducted. The decision to increase the budget in the middle of the fiscal year to accommodate a new insurance carrier required Board approval. These various layers of review, information gathering, and decision-making had not been adequately described at the outset of the process.

Efforts to delineate and clarify the respective responsibilities of the Office of Academic Affairs, Cauldron (the faculty’s executive body), and other governance committees have been undertaken since 2006. These efforts have resulted in the following actions:

- Upon arrival at Naropa in 2006, the current Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty learned that the position holds voting membership on Cauldron. In consultation with Cauldron, it was decided that he would not exercise that vote because all major proposals coming from the faculty are subject to Academic Affairs review (with the potential of either acceptance or veto), thus avoiding a “double vote.”

- Cauldron (the faculty executive committee) disbanded the Academic Policy Committee (APC) in 2007 during a review of faculty governance. The review indicated that APC had been headed for several years by an administrative staff member—the Registrar—and composed of staff drawn from a variety of nonacademic units. Cauldron determined that Chairs Council, which had recently been revitalized, would serve as a group charged with considering academic policies (RR, AA-55).

- In response to the 2007 Focused Visit, Naropa created distinct Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees. In addition, Academic Affairs and Cauldron collaborated on a revision of the policies and procedures for the authorization of new courses, curricula, and degree programs (see Criterion 3). As a model of shared governance, the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees report to both Cauldron and to Academic Affairs. Fundamentally, this is an effective division of labor whereby decisions with narrow impact, such as modest revisions to an existing and already approved course, go directly from one of the Curriculum Committees to Academic Affairs for final consideration. Decisions with broad institutional impact, such as proposals to revise or initiate entire programs, are reviewed first by Cauldron, which then makes a recommendation to Academic Affairs.

- In January 2007, the Vice President for Academic Affairs convened the Faculty Ranks and Contracts Task Force with a charge to bring greater clarity and coherence to faculty contracts, definitions of rank, and timelines for promotion. As a result of the task force’s efforts, the draft Faculty Handbook—currently working its way through a deliberate revision process—defined four categories of Ranked Faculty (Instructor; Visiting Instructor; Core Candidate Faculty at the rank of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor; and Core Faculty at the rank of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor). In addition, the task force and Vice President agreed to a new time-in-rank for core candidacy and promotion reviews. For fall 2009, Cauldron renamed the task force the Faculty Contracts and Handbooks Committee, making it a standing committee within faculty governance and charging it with bringing forward additional revisions to the Faculty Handbook as well as negotiating new language in individual faculty contracts around notification of employment termination.

An important step toward greater transparency and coherence in programmatic decisions is our Department Resource Analysis, first distributed in fall 2009. Originating in the Office of Academic Affairs, this analysis compiles a range of data for all academic departments, including numbers of Named and Adjunct Faculty, staff FTEs, and declared majors; salaries and other staff costs; credit hour production; and ratios including contribution to overhead (CTO) and cost per student credit (RR, AA-11). Academic Affairs and Chairs Council (which is made up of all department chairs) process this information and use it for programmatic decisions and improvement. Here, we emphasize the role this comparative data set plays in governance and administration.

The Department Resource Analysis addresses a longstanding feeling that decisions regarding budgets and staffing have resulted in discrepancies in support across departments and that these do not necessarily reflect priorities agreed upon by the University community. For example, the important ratio of “Declared Majors to Ranked Faculty” showed a range of 8 to 28 across those departments that have 15 or more declared majors. Some departments have more than three times the faculty-to-student ratio of others. Now that it exists, this analysis permits a common base of shared information, greater transparency in programmatic decisions, and informed dialogue about perceived inequities. Further, Academic Affairs and Chairs Council are in a better position to make departmental resource decisions that impact retention and recruitment efforts consistent with the Academic and Strategic Plans.

As the executive body elected by the Ranked Faculty, Cauldron has also been a key player in bringing clarity to the University’s governance structures. For several years, it has been engaged in focused assessment, and at the time of this writing, it is preparing to submit a revised Faculty Handbook to Academic Council (all Ranked Faculty) for the customary ten-day review and comment period.
before acting. A further sign of maturation of faculty governance is the liaison system established by Cauldron in fall 2009. Each Cauldron member serves as a liaison to at least one faculty committee and is responsible for providing advice to the committee and reporting back to Cauldron on the committee’s work. This process is intended to overcome past criticism that committee work did not always materialize in actionable items for the full faculty and that the work of Cauldron and committees did not always align with each other.

Naropa’s nonteaching employees may avail themselves of two deliberative bodies: the Standing Committee for General Staff Meetings and Staff Executive Committee (SEC). The Standing Committee is composed of volunteers who schedule periodic discussions for the staff, as well as meetings between staff and the President and Senior Staff. In contrast, SEC is a recommending body, charged by then-President Coburn in 2005 to participate in the University’s budget planning. The fate of this group is currently uncertain, as in 2008 a University Budget Committee (with membership drawn from the faculty, staff, and students) came into existence.

Finally, a discussion of the most recent presidential transition is in order as it further demonstrates the collaborative nature of decision-making at the University and the guidance provided by the University mission. A Presidential Search Committee—composed of four members of the Board of Trustees, a member of Senior Staff, two Ranked Faculty members, one Adjunct Faculty member, and a student—led the search process. Working with complete confidentiality until candidates were brought to campus and supported by the same search firm that assisted with the 2002 presidential recruitment, the search process was inclusive at several steps along the way. The search firm sought input from the entire Naropa community on the qualities to be included in the search profile. The search committee conducted more than 100 interviews with stakeholders from each of the University’s constituencies regarding the needed characteristics of the new president. The search profile was written with close attention to the Strategic Plan, which had only recently been completed, and in particular to the presidential qualities necessary for the successful implementation of the plan. After a national search, which included multiple opportunities for Naropa faculty, staff, students, and alumni to interview candidates, the search committee recommended one candidate to the Board of Trustees. Exercising its own deliberative and investigative authority, the Board subsequently voted to extend an offer to Dr. Stuart Lord, who began his term on July 1, 2009.

In our view, this presidential search process exhibits some of the best functioning of the University: a highly collaborative process following standard practices in higher education and incorporating multiple dimensions of the University’s commitment to our mission and to reflective practices. The search affirmed a broad consensus on the importance of the University mission and the role the President must play in helping the institution live that mission. Feedback solicited during the interview process probed for the candidates’ understanding of and comfort with the mission.

Upon his arrival on campus in summer 2009, the newly appointed President arranged listening circles to meet with members of the community in order to learn and gather information on the state of the University. Two transition teams were formed shortly after the President’s appointment. An ad hoc committee of the Board of Trustees has provided guidance and served as a sounding board for the President. The second, led by the Director of Human Resources, briefed the President on the broad array of initiatives already underway and oriented him to the procedures and structures of the University. Furthermore, the University has engaged several consultants, other university Presidents, and organizations such as the Association of Governing Boards in support of the transition. Also included in the transition period was the opportunity, requested by the President, to attend and participate in a week-long meditation retreat in order to refresh and deepen his personal relationship with contemplative practice and in order to prepare himself to lead a university dedicated to contemplative education.

Core Component 1E ~ The organization upholds and protects its integrity.

Naropa follows best practices and policies for ensuring its integrity and enforcing both its ethical guidelines and legal obligations. The University’s policies and practices are embodied in faculty and staff handbooks, both of which are available online (eropa.naropa.edu) (RR, HB-1–3). The handbooks cover recruitment and hiring, grievance procedures and other means of addressing personnel concerns, maintenance of official records, and standards for evaluation and training.

When serious issues arise (which is very rare), the University handles these
The most serious recent personnel issue from an employee relations and structural standpoint occurred in summer and fall 2008, when the University decided to redesign the School of Extended Studies (ES) and eliminate most of the staff positions in that unit. An analysis of a multiyear budget deficit led the Vice President for Academic Affairs and ES Executive Director to recommend a new business model to the President. After consulting the chair of the Board of Trustees and members of the Board’s Outreach Committee, the President and Vice President jointly agreed to institute the new model. Once the redesign decision was made, Human Resources (HR) staff met with the Executive Director and seven other staff members to explain management’s decision, provide financial history and context, and announce how consequential layoffs would be handled. Each of the eight employees (staff plus the Executive Director) affected by this decision were given at least four months notice and were able to continue working with pay during those months. Provisions were made to allow the staff to use some hours during the work week to search for other employment.

Simultaneous with HR’s meetings with staff, electronic notification was transmitted from the Office of the President to the University as a whole, explaining the rationale for the business decision and providing information on how HR would coordinate the layoffs in a professional and compassionate manner. Although there were expressions of concern for the affected employees, there also appeared to be immediate acceptance of the decision. Many individuals expressed cognizance of the financial difficulties Extended Studies had faced for several years and supported the difficult, but financially defensible, decision. There also was very little negative feedback from external audiences. Notifications via e-mail were sent to former teachers and presenters, indicating that the new business model would emphasize professional development programming over personal enrichment. As workshop instructors and participants called in, these individuals were informed about the plans to redesign, not eliminate, Extended Studies. An analysis of a multiyear budget deficit led the Vice President for Academic Affairs and ES Executive Director to recommend a new business model to the President. After consulting the chair of the Board of Trustees and members of the Board’s Outreach Committee, the President and Vice President jointly agreed to institute the new model. Once the redesign decision was made, Human Resources (HR) staff met with the Executive Director and seven other staff members to explain management’s decision, provide financial history and context, and announce how consequential layoffs would be handled. Each of the eight employees (staff plus the Executive Director) affected by this decision were given at least four months notice and were able to continue working with pay during those months. Provisions were made to allow the staff to use some hours during the work week to search for other employment.

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prevent conflict and to provide employees with skills to resolve conflict at the local level. Human Resources periodically offers training on leadership topics, workplace conflict, and employee evaluation. Several departments have sponsored trainings in Nonviolent Communication, which have been well attended by faculty and staff. Consistent with a contemplative view of human interdependence and basic goodness, these trainings foster behavior that will not escalate into interpersonal tension or violence. However, aside from those who attended the workshops, these practices have not become part of the everyday fabric of the University, nor have they become part of new or continuing employee orientation and training. This may stand as an example of an excellent initiative that did not receive thorough follow-through.

In the past three years, there have been only three occasions when personnel performance issues or issues of discord rose beyond the level of a department. In each case, skillful handling by Human Resources led to quick resolutions. Two of the three issues were resolved informally, and one formal complaint was resolved amicably; all persons involved are still working at the University.

Similar care and compassion can be found in the procedures and trainings developed by the Office of Student Affairs for dealing with students in distress (RR, SAF-11). Based on student surveys, Student Affairs has developed general guidelines for recognizing when students are experiencing distress and regularly conducts trainings on suicide awareness and prevention for faculty and staff. Eleven Student Affairs staff members provide counseling and support in a wide variety of areas, including family problems, roommate and classmate conflicts, and financial emergencies. The on-campus Counseling Center is a service within Student Affairs, and in addition to providing mental health counseling directly to students, it maintains a referral system to area professionals and specialties. Naropa’s counseling staff interview and approve all professionals on the referral list, and Student Affairs periodically gathers data and holds meetings to evaluate its services and student needs.

A second arena in which Naropa strives to act with integrity involves student admissions practices. Recent improvements to these practices have centered on the development and fair use of admissions criteria. Each academic program at the University has a set of admissions criteria related to the mission of the University, the mission or vision of the department, and the profile of the students best suited to that program. Most programs assess general areas, such as academic preparedness, prior experience, willingness to work with personal issues, connection to contemplative practice and pedagogy, and openness to service and diversity. In addition, each program has discipline-specific criteria. Low-residency programs, which consist of a significant percentage of online delivery of courses, also assess students’ technical and personal abilities for web-based study.

Each spring, academic program chairs and directors meet with the Office of Admissions to assess the effectiveness of the selection criteria and make adjustments to application materials and the application process. In most departments, multiple people are involved in the admissions selection process. The most recent evaluation of admissions criteria and processes made it clear that, although the criteria are well defined, the actual rating of applicants in relation to the criteria is not. Therefore, from April to September 2009, program chairs or directors worked with the Dean of Admissions and the Office of Admissions staff to create a detailed rating scale for each admissions criterion. Rating scales are now judged by Admissions to be well defined, and a training program on the use of the criteria is required of all faculty and staff before they are allowed to read and rate applicant files.

Third, the University has advanced a strong Dual Relationship Policy (RR, HR-5). Because of our small size and focused mission, we attract, and often hire from, a small pool of qualified faculty, staff, meditation instructors, and instructional support professionals. Therefore, the potential for students and faculty, or staff and supervisors, to be in a dual relationship is high. For example, with a limited pool of qualified meditation instructors in the Boulder area, there have been cases in the past where those supervising meditation instruction in academic programs have hired spouses, partners, or close friends. Similar guidelines are needed to define when faculty and students may engage in either personal or professional relationships outside the classroom. For example, it is not unusual for students to seek counseling from their faculty who have private psychotherapy practices or private coaching from instructors in the performing arts. The University’s Dual Relationship Policy attempts to proscribe certain arrangements (e.g., no one may employ or supervise a family member) and to establish a timeline between the ending of a class and when an alternative relationship (e.g., therapeutic, coaching) may begin. A waiver form exists for those circumstances ambiguously covered by the guidelines.4

Finally, the University protects its integrity in many other ways that are worthy of brief mention:

- The Advancement Office takes care to protect the confidentiality of donors

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4 Chairs Council is examining and proposing revisions to the Dual Relationship Policy with regard to student-faculty relationships. The review began during the 2008–2009 academic year, and a recommendation to Cauldron is expected in spring 2010.
Criterion One

and prospective donors and has adopted a Donors Bill of Rights (RR, ADV-10 and 11).

• The University’s response to the threat of the H1N1 virus included presenting current CDC information on the main homepage (www.naropa.edu) in fall 2009, conducting a confidential tracking survey, and developing an action plan.

• The Allen Ginsberg Library uses best practices in helping students and faculty to follow copyright and fair use protocols for library materials.

• The Registrar, Bursar, and other units within the Office of Student Administrative Services follow best practices and legal requirements for protecting student confidentiality. A recent effort by the Registrar ensures that all e-mail communications between the University and students is conducted via official Naropa e-mail addresses to protect students.

• Online courses require password-protected student login to ensure student identity.

• In the light of incidents at both the local and national levels, the University has appropriately taken precautions to ensure rapid response and communication in times of crisis. The University is in the process of developing an even more effective means for crisis communication. Naropa’s Emergency Notification System includes text messaging to cell phones and e-mail, an extensive public address system on all campuses, pop-up e-mail notices, and blast voicemail. An Emergency Procedures manual has been designed and distributed to all workstations and offices on all campuses.

Program Decisions

In the past five years, the University has made difficult decisions to ensure its long-term financial viability, including redesigning or eliminating programs that were prohibitively costly, lacking clarity of mission, or simply unsuccessful. These changes include terminating the Gerontology master’s program, closing the Hedgerow Farm program, discontinuing the Prison program, restructuring the BFA degree, suspending study abroad programs, and scaling back Extended Studies offerings. (The chapter on Criterion 2 places these decisions in the context of Naropa’s financial picture and planning procedures).

There was understandable displeasure surrounding each of these closures or modifications, even though they were necessary and eventually came to be accepted by the University community. In many cases, senior management made decisions after careful study of the situation, often drawing in the relevant parties before action was taken and decisions announced. Although the University has learned much about how to implement such cuts and changes with due deliberation, the University’s governing bodies have upheld the charge to senior management to keep the University on sound financial footing and in alignment with its mission. Difficult decisions like these indicate the University’s commitment to operate with integrity for the long-term sustainability and viability of the institution.

Mission and Integrity

A mixed picture emerges with regard to the University’s capacity to protect its resources, such as its information and records. During the past six years, multiple grants have enabled Naropa to digitally preserve an extensive collection of teachings and performances audio-recorded since the University’s founding. In 2008, a federal grant was awarded to the University to develop a records collection policy and model archives for historically important documents. Investigative aids assist patrons in searching the database for desired materials (www.naropa.edu/archive/index.cfm), and the audio-archives are part of an international collection called the Internet Archives. At present, Naropa’s archival activities are dependent upon external funding. Although the Director of the Allen Ginsberg Library has submitted a planning document that integrates archival and bibliographic functions (RR, AGL-1), the level of financial support that the University is able to provide is likely to limit the full implementation of the plan.

With regard to Information Technology (IT) resources, there are areas the University can take pride in and others in need of further attention. Protection of the confidentiality of University data, e-mail systems, and student records appears strong. For example, access to shared computer drives is password-protected and open only by permission. In addition, the IT Department requires that passwords be changed regularly. In contrast, the lack of a detailed disaster recovery plan and of redundant systems leads to concerns about the University’s ability to protect itself against IT disasters. These gaps result from scarce resources and are included in the President’s fall 2009 charge to the Technology Working Group (RR, IT-3). A positive sign is that the working group has been asked to assess the University’s technology resources and propose improvements. In addition, the hiring of a consulting firm to examine potential inefficiencies across the multiple systems used by University offices is currently under discussion.

Although limited, the University’s financial resources are carefully tended by...
a group of dedicated and long-term professionals, with appropriate checks-and-balances and best practices employed as deemed appropriate. Our annual financial audits, conducted by external auditors who change every few years, are consistently satisfactory and available to the Naropa community in the office of the Vice President for Business and Finance (RR, BF-6 and 7). The University follows all Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) regulations and complies with all covenants placed by our bank, Wells Fargo, on our bond debt. Our financial standing with our bank has been strong since 1978.

Naropa has satisfactory internal financial and budgetary controls, policies, and procedures; a cash reserve to cover future expenses; all necessary insurance; an operating reserve in our annual budget; and debt levels that are reasonable and affordable. In addition, the oversight and management of the Office of Business and Finance is in the hands of a highly experienced professional, the current Vice President for Business and Finance, who has served Naropa in this capacity for more than 17 years.

The Vice President for Business and Finance is a member of the President’s Senior Staff, collaborating with other senior administrators and advisers on financial and budgetary matters. The Vice President co-chairs the University Budget Committee (UBC), which serves as an advisory body to the budgeting process while providing transparency and clear communication on budgetary issues to the entire institution. The UBC also provides opportunities for collaboration and shared proposal-generating for faculty, staff, and students. The Board of Trustees’ Budget and Finance Committee is active, meeting almost monthly by phone with the Vice President, considering matters of cash flow, debt service, and financial investments in the implementation of the Strategic Plan. In our judgment, the University’s financial processes are adequate for upholding the University’s integrity and ethical functioning.

Summary and Future Directions

This analysis of Naropa’s alignment with Criterion 1 leads to a number of conclusions and questions for further exploration. First, the University’s relationship to its mission is very strong, and the mission informs the institution’s planning and operational activities. We have presented evidence that members of the institution know and orient their actions to the mission. Further, we believe that recent revisions to the Mission Statement have served to sharpen awareness of mission-critical themes and have led organically to the strategic and academic planning processes.

Second, the University’s relationship to diversity issues appears well developed except in our engagement with certain internal topics and external constituencies. Many activities and practices fostered by the University are designed to invoke our commitment to diversity, including racial and ethnic diversity, ecumenism, and religious pluralism. Nevertheless, some students express concern that their departments and faculty do not support their particular modes of religious expression. The faculty recognizes this, and increasing attention is being paid to diversity training, the hiring of individuals from diverse contemplative and religious traditions, and a broadening of the curriculum. With regard to community relations, this self-study recommends a directed examination of the diverse communities that exist beyond the University, their needs, and our ability to form meaningful partnerships with them.

Finally, Naropa has improved its capacity for governance and administration, developing deliberative bodies that support the work of senior managers and clarifying the role that Cauldron plays in leading faculty and interfacing with the Office of Academic Affairs. Still, there is work to be done in this area. We recommend that the University continue its efforts to bring both transparency and efficiency to its decision-making processes, that it continue to clarify reporting and decision-making lines, and that it develop more effective mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement.
Criterion Two
Preparing for the Future

The institution’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Naropa University’s history of planning and resource allocation is deeply tied to the commitment of the Trustees, staff, and faculty to achieve the contemplative mission of the University. The past ten years at Naropa embody a maturing culture of strategic planning, beginning in 2000 with the “View 2005” Strategic Plan Draft, which was reviewed by the 2000 Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Comprehensive Review Team and led to a final revised “View 2005” Strategic Plan in 2001 (RR, SP-6). The final “View 2005” document responded directly to concerns and recommendations raised by the 2000 HLC Visiting Team. In 2004, newly appointed President Thomas Coburn guided the development of a planning document, “New Directions 2005–2008,” to focus the University’s goals and directions over the first two years of his presidency (RR, SP-8). The following year, President Coburn set the stage for a comprehensive strategic planning process that began in fall 2006 and was completed in fall 2008. In September of that year, the Board of Trustees formally adopted the current Strategic Plan, “Deliver Distinction with Excellence” (RR, SP-4).

CORE COMPONENT 2A – The institution realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.

Naropa’s strategic planning significantly evolved and matured to better respond to the University’s strengths and challenges, opportunities, and efforts to optimize the use of resources. The strategic planning process itself evidences this maturity, as do the strategic directions outlined in the plan as well as the deployment of the plan since its adoption.

The strategic planning process occurred in two phases. Phase I was led by Performa Consulting; eleven Action Committees, composed of senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and Board members, were organized to gather and analyze data in key thematic areas during a one-year period (RR, SP-17–18). The information gathered in Phase I provided data for Phase II, led
by Wellspring Consulting and a University Meta-Team, to identify strategic goals and objectives as well as to conduct further feasibility studies. The ten Meta-Team members were selected based on their ability to represent a broad strategic view of the University and included the President, members of Senior Staff, faculty, a graduate student, and Trustees. The planning process was participatory and inclusive, provided communication flow, and sought to involve thinking and input from all levels and cross-sections of the University. The process enabled the campus constituents to be stakeholders in the Strategic Plan (RR, SP-4). (See also eropa.naropa.edu/staff/strategic/root.asp for related documents on the strategic planning process.)

Recognizing the Mission Statement as a centering piece to which all aspects and functions of the University should align and be accountable, the Board of Trustees Vision and Planning Committee began to prepare for strategic planning by updating and revising the statement in 2005; the aim was to achieve greater clarity and conciseness. This revised Mission Statement was the foundation guiding and shaping the strategic planning process; it now directs the alignment of academic and administrative functions of the University (see Criterion 1).

It is important to note that as Naropa seeks to meet future societal trends, especially an increasingly diverse and multicultural society, a strengthened articulation of diversity as central to our values was developed. This provides the institution with a framework to integrate diversity goals into campus priorities in the Strategic Plan and throughout the academic and administrative departments (RR, MD-1). For further details, see the discussion of diversity in Criteria 1 and 3.

**Strategic Plan**

The 2009 Strategic Plan, “Deliver Distinction with Excellence,” represents a ten-year comprehensive plan concerned with two critical areas of institutional improvement: (1) strengthening and improving the University's educational practices in order to meet the changing face of today's students, thus providing relevant and meaningful education as a premier contemplatively-based educational institution; and (2) efficiently managing and enhancing the University’s resources critical to accomplishing our educational objectives and assuring our long-term financial viability. More specifically, the Plan outlines five strategic goals:

1. Strengthen the educational experience for students.
2. Provide students with knowledge, skills, and contemplative training to enhance their effectiveness in the broader world.
3. Make Naropa more financially stable.
4. Compensate faculty and staff at a level comparable to peers at similar institutions.
5. Enhance the University's overall sense of community.

These identified goals resulted from constituent and external interviews and surveys, studies of trends in higher education, comparisons with benchmark schools, and financial modeling. The planning process used five peer institutions to consider how other institutions manage their resources and seem to attain financial stability. Three dimensions—tuition, endowment, and enrollment size—were distinguishing factors, with each of the benchmark institutions exceeding Naropa's numbers on at least two of the dimensions.

Recognizing that growth of the University's permanent endowment can be slow, the Strategic Plan calls for the deployment of three financial levers—annual increases in tuition, a gradual reduction over several years in our financial aid (discount) rate, and steady increases to both undergraduate and graduate enrollment. Fund-raising goals are also established, though these are largely modeled as contributions to annual operations and strategic initiatives rather than as an attempt to build our endowment.

In order to achieve these financial aims, the Strategic Plan incorporates an Action Plan, the purpose of which is to generate additional data analysis, thinking, and operational steps that move the Strategic Plan forward (RR, SP-2). The aim is to build the overall quality of Naropa's education and therefore make the University more attractive to potential students and philanthropists. In order to sustain a dynamic implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Action Plan calls for a continuous process of alignment, accountability, and engagement of all academic and administrative units toward the various strategic growth decisions. The Action Plan identifies key responsible parties, specific actions to be taken, timelines, resources needed, and accountability. Two versions of the Action Plan exist: one is the original set of actions as implicated by the Strategic Plan; the second represents an audit or update of accomplishments of specific action steps from fall 2008 through summer 2009 (RR, SP-14 and SP-20).

The continuing planning process and Year One implementation of the Strategic Plan have produced two additional documents to date that set forth directions to accomplish our goals. These are:

1. Academic Plan 2009–2014—Part I (RR, AA-1); and
Additionally, in Year One of the Strategic Plan implementation, a thorough analysis of course registration patterns and modeling of a 10 percent increase in average class size took place. Actions taken as a result of the analysis produced an efficiency savings of approximately $140,000 in the instructional budget in Year Two (2009–2010). This resulted from a reduction in the number of course sections offered to students without a commensurate reduction in the total number of credit hours enrolled in by students. (For a discussion of the impact of this efficiency exercise on average class size, see Criterion 4.) The Strategic Plan calls for such savings to be used for faculty compensation increases, though it does not specify the timing of these increases. For the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 academic years, the Office of Academic Affairs, with the agreement of the President and Senior Staff, is designating these funds to support the implementation of the Academic Plan, specifically through faculty and staff development.

The development and articulation of the “Deliver Distinction with Excellence” plan is unprecedented in Naropa’s history, representing methodical analysis of internal and external data and the weighing of multiple options. Further, it sets strategic directions and specific actions that encompass academic, administrative, enrollment management, financial, fund-raising, and marketing goals. There is accountability both in broad strategic aspirations and in detailed implementation steps.

The plan consists of a model of highly interdependent levers that are intended to produce financial growth and sustainability. The next steps in the University’s planning include the development of a Campus Master Plan to address the physical environment conducive to learning and productive work and a Technology Plan to address technology and information resources necessary to enhance learning and productivity.

Strategic Planning Financial Projections

As previously noted, the Strategic Plan is based on a set of revenue projections designed to create a financially sustainable future for the University. As a small private institution, Naropa is dependent on student enrollment and cannot rely on a large endowment to provide a significant source of operational funding. Key financial projections in the Strategic Plan anticipate enrollment growth of 3–5 percent in undergraduate, 2–3 percent in graduate, and 5–10 percent in low-residency online programs during the next ten years. Net tuition (i.e., inclusive of discounting) is expected to grow from approximately $18M in FY2010–2011 to $38M by FY2017–2018. Further, the financial model projects growth in our net annual operational surplus from $804,000 to $4,827,000 in the same period of time (RR, SP-1).

Although the University did not suffer large endowment losses from the 2008 economic downturn, it is not immune from the financial challenges that impact enrollment numbers, affordability and financial aid need, and increased costs of educational delivery. The Strategic Plan establishes increased enrollment targets, net tuition targets, and additional expenses and investments needed to reach enrollment growth. The financial targets outlined in the plan are regularly reviewed by Senior Staff in the context of current realities at Naropa and the prevailing economic situation. For example, the Enrollment Management Plan indicates slightly slower growth in new student enrollment and more attention to retention than originally projected by the Strategic Plan (RR, AA-36). (See below for a discussion of the Expanded Enrollment Management Team.)

To advance the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees approved $1.5M for jump-start funding during a three-year period (2009–2012). These funds resulted from the sale of a piece of Naropa property and two anonymous bequests. Additional funding, in the form of a bank bond, may be available for construction projects aligned with the Strategic Plan to occur on the Nalanda Campus.

Jump-start funding distribution has been, and continues to be, based on Senior Staff’s prioritization of those action steps that leverage or generate new resources in the near term to support other strategic priorities. For example, for the 2009–2010 academic year, additional admissions and financial aid staff were hired, three graduate degrees were targeted for enrollment growth through either enhanced marketing or the development of new delivery formats, and an undergraduate retention effort was established (RR, SP-16). The Board is expected to review requests for the second phase of jump-start funding in January 2010, and an update on this funding of the Strategic Plan will be included in a letter submitted to the Peer Review Team prior to the March campus visit.

Advancement

During the past five years, Naropa has raised an average of $1M per year in gift funds. The Strategic Plan contains ambitious fund-raising goals that, on average, would constitute a near tripling of the University’s fund-raising revenues during the next nine years. The ten-year fund-raising model embedded in the Strate-
focusing its efforts on increasing its engagement with donors by building relation-

from another payment on an anonymous bequest ($171,000). The department is

Advancement team has raised $805,516 in cash and pledges, some of which came

of the FY2009–2010 Advancement Plan. To date in fiscal year 2009–2010, the

versity), also occurred in FY2008–2009. This delayed design and implementation

“moves management” system (the method by which major donors are tracked

with extensive research on the donor database and an overhaul of the office’s

kit now exist (RR, ADV-20).

Several factors are likely to impede Advancement’s attainment of the specified goals in the time frame originally delineated by the Strategic Plan. First, the economic crash that became fully manifest in 2008–2009 caused Advancement to question the attainability of Year One goals, and a December 2008 review resulted in a downward alteration of the first year’s fund-raising target (from $1.25M to $1.05M). Advancement closed FY2008–2009 having received a total of $1,318,816 in gifts, thus exceeding the original goal. However, this was due in large part to the receipt of payments on two anonymous bequests ($334,412.33) in that year that were then dedicated to jump-start programs.

Second, given the timing of the development and monetization of University priorities (specifically those deriving from the Academic and Enrollment Management Plans), the continuing emergence of other priorities (technology and facilities master planning), and hesitancy among funding sources given the current economic climate, Advancement recognizes the challenge in reaching the aggressive fund-raising goals established by the Strategic Plan. On the positive side, since fall 2009, a list of fund-raising priorities and a fund-raising communication tool kit now exist (RR, ADV-20).

Third, an evaluation of Advancement’s historical performance, combined with extensive research on the donor database and an overhaul of the office’s “moves management” system (the method by which major donors are tracked and scheduled for particular contacts and requests for contributions from the University), also occurred in FY2008–2009. This delayed design and implementation of the FY2009–2010 Advancement Plan. To date in fiscal year 2009–2010, the Advancement team has raised $805,516 in cash and pledges, some of which came from another payment on an anonymous bequest ($171,000). The department is focusing its efforts on increasing its engagement with donors by building relation-
At the graduate level, the Academic Plan calls for heightened attention to the ways contemplative and academic work can be intentionally employed and integrated by each discipline conferring a master’s degree at the University. In addition, graduate programs are called to align their curriculum with both the learning outcomes articulated in the Academic Plan and the appropriate discipline-based academic, artistic, or professional standards.

A further discussion of the Academic Plan can be found in Criterion 3.


The Strategic Plan models the financial benefits of significant enrollment growth starting in fall 2009 and extending out ten years. The plan projects annual growth at the undergraduate level, graduate level, and for distance education. If successful, this would represent a total increase of 484 students, from a baseline of 1,060 in fall 2009 to 1,544 in fall 2018 (RR, SP-9, p. 29).

The Action Plan derived from the Strategic Plan leaves decisions on how to sequence and calibrate the projected enrollment growth to senior management. Beginning in summer 2008, before the Strategic Plan had been finalized, and lasting through spring 2009, Academic Affairs and the Enrollment Management Team (consisting of the Assistant Vice President for Student Administrative Services, the Dean of Admissions, and the Dean of Students) collaborated on the construction of a road map to identify existing programs or student categories for enrollment attention. Known as the Expanded Enrollment Management Team (EEMT), this group’s work culminated in the construction of what is considered the second part of the Academic Plan, an Enrollment Management Plan with targets that are mindful of changes in the economic landscape since fall 2008 and estimates of the investments needed to realize the targeted growth (RR, AA-36).

The Enrollment Management Plan sets an operational time frame of four years (fall 2009 through fall 2012) as the basis for initial planning. Whereas the ten-year targets established by the Strategic Plan shape broad institutional decision-making, the EEMT determined that an initial four-year period could be more realistically operationalized. In addition, the EEMT recognized that growth in the University’s distance education programming would likely require the addition of new degree fields. Given the time needed for market research, curriculum development, and the HLC’s authorization, the EEMT’s road map does not see significant enrollment growth in low-residency or completely online degrees until after 2012.

With regard to graduate enrollment, the Enrollment Management Plan targets five degree programs that have the potential to contribute student growth. The plan is based on information collected during the Department Systematic Review process (see Criterion 3), informal evaluation generated by admissions counselors about potential student interest, and commissioned market studies. To illustrate, the EEMT proposed a variety of changes to these specific programs:

- **MA in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology**: Establish a new delivery system and schedule design that will enable working adults to complete the degree on a part-time basis;
- **Master of Divinity**: Enhance the marketing plan in the Office of Marketing and Communications based on an emphasis of the professional licensure opportunities for graduates as well as careers as chaplains and pastoral counselors;
- **MA in Religious Studies and MFA in Writing**: Revise existing curriculum in order to reduce the complexity of the degree (e.g., the MA in Religious Studies streamlined the number of concentrations without sacrificing the depth and breadth of the coursework) or to adjust to new competition in the field (e.g., the MFA in Writing & Poetics is currently undergoing an external program review, the goal of which is to plan for a modernization of the curriculum in response to the burgeoning of MFA programs in the United States).

In general, the Enrollment Management Plan models new student numbers, as well as retention of these students, as a means to achieve the revenue forecasts of the Strategic Plan.

At the undergraduate level, the EEMT chose not to select particular majors for focused attention and enrollment growth but instead proposed an enhanced retention effort and robust implementation of the curriculum envisioned by the Academic Plan- Part I. Enrollment data indicate a multiyear problem with retention of first-year students from their first to sophomore years (see below). Clarification of the contemplative journey and its relationship to academic coursework, as well as the addition of courses not currently offered, are hypothesized to be potential contributors to undergraduate retention. In addition, the hiring of staff dedicated to student retention, the building of an early warning system for identifying students at risk of failing, and enhanced diagnostic testing during first-year orientation are also in the process of being put into place as of January 2010.
Naropa’s physical campus remains a challenge for employees and students because it is spread across three instructional sites, with classrooms in older buildings, an inadequate technology infrastructure, and lack of adequate student-centered space. The strategic planning process identified three major capital projects that address current needs and take into account the projected enrollment growth. These facilities include a student community and learning center, upgraded instructional facilities, and additional student housing. A space utilization study conducted during the first phase of strategic planning indicates that creative scheduling should enable the University to meet the classroom needs of increased enrollment without significant new construction in the next several years (RR, OPS-3). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that existing spaces must be upgraded and new spaces built to accommodate the specialized teaching that is integral to Naropa’s curriculum.

Further detailed analyses of existing building capacity and financial implications of proposed facilities have been conducted, and discussions regarding proposed sequencing of near-term capital improvements and the development of a Campus Master Plan are underway. The Campus Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees preliminarily approved an RFP process to develop a high-level master plan that builds upon the Strategic Plan’s recommendations and lays out the architectural overview and design requirements for Naropa’s campus configuration. This includes residential housing as a contributor to enrollment growth and the consolidation of campuses to improve operations and the sense of community. One idea to be tested is that, in the next ten years, the University might combine the Paramita and Nalanda Campuses on the latter site. Funding for the master plan will be determined in January 2010 as part of the second round of jump-start requests.

Planning for technology has occurred during at least the past five years, though limited progress has been made in developing the University’s information technologies because of competing institutional priorities and budget constraints. A report developed in 2004 by a staff and faculty Instructional Technology Group developed a prioritized list of technology needs (RR, IT-2). In 2005, a Library Needs Assessment Report made broader library recommendations that implicated technology needs to support the Allen Ginsberg Library (RR, AGL-6).

In 2009, a Library and Technology Task Force prepared a report again identifying a lack of technology to support the delivery of information (RR, AGL-4).

To address the University’s long-standing technology needs, President Stuart Lord formed a campus-wide Technology Working Group in September 2009. This committee has been charged with overseeing the research, acquisition, implementation, and use of computer-based technologies in alignment with Naropa’s Strategic Plan. The committee members include faculty, Senior Staff members, and staff managers whose departments rely heavily on technology to perform their work. The first step taken by the committee was to identify a consultant to assist the University in the development of a five-year Information Technologies Plan (RR, IT-5). The appointment by the President of the Technology Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, signals an elevated commitment by the University to technology planning.

As the University has grown and expanded its academic and other programs, it has become increasingly challenged to articulate clearly its distinctiveness and the nature and purpose of its educational offerings. The Strategic Plan calls for a succinct articulation of the University’s distinctiveness, mission, and educational programs, and in doing so it also calls for renewed branding, a new marketing strategy, and an aligned communication strategy. In the last year, the University filled a vacant position for an Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications to move this initiative forward; this appointment represents an elevation of the importance of institutional branding, as the position previously existed at a director level. Following that appointment, a new Public Relations Manager was also hired.

Initial plans to contract an external branding consultant have been suspended in lieu of redesigning and retooling the existing Naropa website as a preliminary and crucial step to defining our message. Marketing and Communications, under the new Assistant Vice President’s leadership, is developing and implementing strategies to strengthen Naropa’s branding and visibility through internal means (RR, MC-4). In addition, Marketing and Communications has begun an aggressive “search optimization” initiative to maximize the marketing potential of our website by tying web pages with data on the keywords that the public uses in exploring the Internet.
The University has worked to strengthen the annual budgeting process on two fronts: (1) increasing staff, student, and faculty participation in the process in an effort to create better transparency and collective planning around the development of the budget; and (2) moving toward the development of a multiyear budget. In 2008, President Thomas Coburn created a ten-member University Budget Committee (UBC), which includes a senior administrator, three faculty (including one Adjunct Faculty member), three staff members, and three students (RR, PR-9). The UBC is cochaired by the Vice President for Business and Finance and a representative of Cauldron (the faculty executive committee). The primary purpose of the UBC is to review budget proposals submitted by senior managers, review financial forecasts created by the Office of Business and Finance, consider requests for budget additions, and make a final recommendation to Senior Staff and the President on the next year’s budget.

In December 2009, the UBC was expanded in response to President Stuart Lord’s announcement of a budget reduction initiative (RR, PR-18). The UBC will continue to function as a university-wide deliberative body reviewing budget proposals and making a final budget recommendation to Senior Staff and the President. Its portfolio has been expanded in that it now must work to analyze and identify permanent reductions in our operational budget.

A word about this budget initiative is in order. In his first six months as President, Dr. Lord initiated a comprehensive review of the University’s finances, including the manner in which enrollment projections enter into budget forecasts and how one-time adjustments are used to balance the annual budget. This resulted in a determination that the University should endeavor to “right-size” the budget by reducing personnel and operational expenses in line with projected revenue. Aiming for maximal transparency in this difficult process, the President created a Budget Resource Group (BRG) whose role is to: (1) analyze multiyear financial data and projections and make a recommendation to the President about the size of the needed budget reduction; (2) approve a template for senior managers’ submission of budget proposals; (3) field suggestions coming from the community and serve as a clearinghouse; and (4) analyze institutional data to develop benchmarks for ongoing financial planning. To assist the process, the University hired a consultant to provide ongoing support to the BRG.

As this initiative is relatively new and was announced in the late stages of our writing of the self-study document, we will provide the Peer Review Team and the HLC with an update prior to the campus visit.
appointed a Budget Resource Group to analyze scenarios and the impact of department restructuring and personnel reduction on campus operations. The impact on the Strategic Plan’s initiatives will need to be assessed as well.

Finally, institutional reorganization is currently being planned and will likely result in changes to the senior level leadership. Both financial and institutional reorganization may have significant impact on the University during the next six to eight months. Naropa will provide the Peer Review Team with an update on this work just prior to the March 2010 visit.

In summary, Naropa’s Strategic Plan provides evidence of the University’s capacity to plan for its future as directed by its mission. The strategic planning process involved dozens of internal constituencies, who analyzed data coming from employees, students, alumni, and public stakeholders. In addition, this process employed two different consulting firms, one with expertise in grassroots institutional planning and one with strength in macro-level quantitative modeling. Taking all this input into account, the resulting Strategic Plan provides key directions for the improvement of Naropa’s educational offerings, increased revenue generation through enrollment growth, and enhanced efforts to meet the community and financial needs of employees.

The Strategic Plan is a living document, and its implementation has had to respond to shifts in both the internal and external landscape. First, the plan required the development of two further documents – an Academic Plan and Enrollment Management Plan – to flesh out the path to delivering a stronger educational program and attracting additional students. Second, the two more-recent documents call for studied reflection by faculty on the University’s curriculum and further analysis by the Expanded Enrollment Management Team on emerging enrollment trends. Both efforts have produced modifications to the time line and approach to reaching the Strategic Plan’s goals. Finally, the Strategic Plan has also set in motion a prioritization for the limited jump-start funds available to support curriculum improvements, the enrollment effort, and campus and technology planning.

CORE COMPONENT 2B – The institution’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

Successful implementation of our Strategic Plan, “Deliver Distinction with Excellence,” requires increasing our resource base and innovating the use of our existing financial resources. As a private institution, Naropa is heavily tuition dependent; however, other sources of revenue, such as contributions, endowment income, and auxiliary revenues, are important sources of support for our overall financial success. The following discussion presents an overview of the University’s financial resources. As stated above, our future financial viability is challenged by the need to improve fundraising performance, develop revenue streams consistent with the strategic directions of the University, and manage expenses to support these strategic directions.

Financial Resources

Naropa University relies on tuition for an average of 80 percent of the annual operating budget (Table 2.1). Our review of the budgets for institutions whose total revenue is comparable to Naropa’s indicates that, on average, these institutions are between 60 and 70 percent tuition-dependent. These other institutions significantly outperform Naropa in receipt of government grants and private giving and in return on investments such as their endowment.

Table 2.1. Tuition as Percent of Total Revenue

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Though tuition dependency has remained consistently high during the past five years, data from FY2008–2009 show an increase in that dependency. The latter resulted from a reduction in offerings by Naropa’s School of Extended Studies and the loss of revenue from the School as Lender program.

Gross revenue from tuition and fees increased from $16,550,521 in FY2004–2005 to $18,381,684 in FY2008–2009, an increase of 11.1 percent. In that same period, net program student tuition (after financial aid) increased from $14,002,958 to $15,016,256. This is an increase of 7.2 percent.

Financial aid as a percentage of revenue from tuition and fees has increased from 12 percent in FY2003–2004 to 19 percent at the time of this writing. Significant increases have been made in both undergraduate and graduate discounts. The current undergraduate discount rate is 29 percent, and the graduate discount rate is 7.55 percent. These figures do not include endowed scholarships of $72,000 in FY2008–2009 or scholarships funded from non-endowed gifts. These increases in financial aid have been made in order to improve both recruitment and reten-
tion of students and thus call into question the feasibility of lowering the discount rate at the pace called for in the Strategic Plan. Consistent with our mission, all Naropa financial aid is need-based rather than merit-based.

The remaining sources of revenue come from gifts, invested income, a student housing program, student loan interest, Extended Studies, and auxiliary services. The Extended Studies program was reduced in January 2009 and may be expanded as a new budget model is developed.

The University’s FY2009–2010 projected total gross revenues are approximately $20M.

**Expenses**

From FY2004–2005 through FY2008–2009, total operating expenses increased by approximately 1.6 percent. During this same period, operating revenue after financial aid and excluding extraordinary income declined by 1 percent (Table 2.2).

For the past several years, the University defunded particular expenses in order to enter each fiscal year with a balanced budget. For example, during FY2008–2009, the facilities budget was temporarily reduced by more than $200,000. During FY2009–2010, the University restored facilities funding but temporarily suspended retirement matching contributions. As described above, the University is currently engaged in a budget initiative that is designed to reduce operating expenses for FY2010–2011 and beyond on a permanent basis. Initial projections indicate that, once accomplished, the University’s financial status will improve significantly, including the production of steady operational surpluses that can be used to fund various priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan.

**Assets**

Naropa has maintained a strong balance sheet. At the end of FY2008–2009, net assets were $15,253,731, or 48 percent of total assets. Total assets are in excess of $31,000,000, of which 20 percent has been traditionally held in cash and in short-term investments. Table 2.3 provides a five-year comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Operating Revenue After Financial Aid</th>
<th>Operating Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2004–2005</td>
<td>17,608,372</td>
<td>17,361,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2005–2006</td>
<td>17,656,796</td>
<td>18,182,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2006–2007</td>
<td>17,788,981</td>
<td>17,323,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2007–2008</td>
<td>18,000,594</td>
<td>17,792,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2008–2009</td>
<td>17,450,681</td>
<td>17,637,530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University spending policy is prudent and is designed to preserve the spending power of the endowment in perpetuity. Our policy is similar to those of most other colleges and universities. The annual draw is limited to 5 percent...
of a 12-quarter average of the market value. Using the 12-quarter average avoids experiencing big swings in the available funding in any given year. The University has never taken more than 5 percent (on average) out of the endowment in any given year. Colorado has enacted the new standards established by the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) for endowment management, and Naropa’s management and spending of the endowment are based on that new law.

Naropa’s endowment income is a source of revenue that is relied upon for annual operations. The purposes to which endowment income is put are shown in Table 2.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.4. Endowment by Designated Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Restricted Uses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of CIC Ratios

Table 2.5 shows the results of the ratio analysis as developed by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), and these ratios are discussed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.5. Summary of CIC Ratios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Reserve Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on Net Assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viability Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ratios have been calculated using the numbers from the University’s audited financial statements. However, the outcomes for Naropa have been significantly affected by real estate gains, interest rate fluctuations, and investment gains and losses. Although the sale of certain real estate holdings did improve Naropa’s financial picture and provides some working capital for Strategic Plan projects, removing such extraordinary events as real estate sales results in more stable and meaningful ratios that better reflect our overall financial health.

Prepared for the Future

The Primary Reserve Ratio is a measurement of how long the institution can operate without income. For the entire measured period of the past five years, Naropa has maintained ratios between .37 and .53, which translates to our consistently having resources for between four and five months of operations, or approximately one semester. There is no doubt that Naropa needs to improve this ratio. The current budget initiative will permanently reduce operating expenses by $1.2 to $1.4M and will improve this ratio. Successful accomplishment of the Strategic Plan will also improve this ratio.

Net Income Ratio

The Net Income Ratio is a measurement of current year income in relation to the prior year’s total Net Assets. As it is primarily based on any given year’s net income, this ratio can be volatile; it is also affected by planned activity, such as current investments in future growth. The outcomes for Naropa have been significantly affected by real estate gains, interest rate fluctuations, and investment gains and losses. Removing these extraordinary events results in a more stable Net Income Ratio, as shown in Table 2.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.6. Net Income Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unadjusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unadjusted numbers are derived from the University’s audited financial statements; the adjusted ratios are calculated after these extraordinary revenue items are removed. As can be seen, the adjusted ratios are basically flat across five years and show that Naropa has operated close to the breakeven point each year.

Return on Net Assets Ratio

The Return on Net Assets Ratio determines whether an institution is financially better off than in previous years by measuring total economic return. The same adjustments as described above are included in Table 2.7.
**Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future**

### Table 2.7. Return on Net Assets Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unadjusted</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The adjusted ratios again show that Naropa’s financial results have remained flat, neither increasing nor decreasing, in a five-year period.

**Viability Ratio**

This ratio measures the availability of expendable net assets to cover debt should the institution need to settle its obligations. Naropa has consistently maintained a greater than 1:1 ratio. The debt that we have incurred in the past several years is related to building purchases and is long term, offering greater availability than the ratio would otherwise indicate.

**Composite Financial Index**

As the table below demonstrates, Naropa’s unadjusted Composite Financial Index (CFI) has fluctuated markedly over the years and thus is not a very meaningful analysis of the University’s financial health. This fluctuation results from the extraordinary items already described. On the other hand, the adjusted CFI has stayed between 1.6 and 2.5 across five years (see Table 2.8).

### Table 2.8. Composite Financial Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unadjusted</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the CIC, the adjusted scores indicate that we need to “reengineer the University.” The Strategic Plan acknowledges this situation and, along with the recently announced budget initiative, is intended to accomplish that goal.

**Department of Education**

The United States Department of Education (DOE) has its own formulas for measuring the financial viability of colleges and universities. Although the Department’s formula is similar to those of the CIC and the HLC, they are not identical. The DOE requires that schools have a minimum score of 1.5. Naropa has consistently maintained a score well above this requirement—thus ensuring Naropa’s continued eligibility for federal financial aid programs (see Table 2.9).

### Table 2.9. Department of Education Sensitivity Ratio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naropa</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE Required</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contribution to Overhead (CTO)**

Naropa’s Board of Trustees has established a measure of Contribution to Overhead (CTO) as the basis for assessing the financial health of degree programs and related revenue centers. CTO is calculated as follows: all direct expenses associated with a degree program are deducted from the program’s revenues. Expenses that are charged against revenue include instruction, administration, and operations, but not the work of other administrative offices in supporting academic programs (e.g., Admissions, Marketing and Communications). Revenues are credited to programs based on the number of credits they generate multiplied by the discounted tuition value of each credit. That is, they are a function of enrolled students without regard to major or degree program. The CTO is expressed as both a dollar amount and as a percentage, the latter calculated as the percentage of total revenue represented by the surplus. The Board considers 40 percent to be the minimum CTO that programs should achieve.

In 2006, the Department Systematic Review initiated by Academic Affairs incorporated CTO analysis in the annual program review. Although some programs fall below the expected 40 percent CTO, Academic Affairs has endeavored to work with departments to increase enrollment and retention, or reduce costs, rather than invoke the University’s “Sunset Provisions” (RR, AA-68; see also discussions in individual department DSR minutes). The average CTO generated across all academic programs was 55 percent for the 2008–2009 academic year.1

In the past ten years, Naropa has invoked the Sunset Provision once.2

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1 This calculation excludes the CTO from two departments: Interdisciplinary Studies (whose students primarily take courses from outside the department as they construct an interdisciplinary major) and Peace Studies (which was only in its second year of operation).
2 Three other programs have been discontinued or are scheduled for discontinuation: the MLS in Creation Spirituality ended when the institutional arrangement with Wisdom University terminated; the MA in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology’s Music Therapy Concentration was discontinued in response to changes in National Music Therapy requirements that encourage undergraduate education; and the MA in Lecoq Based Actor–Created Theater will terminate in summer 2010 as a result of a nonrenewal of the contract between the London International School of Performing Arts and Naropa.
1997–1998 academic year, the MA in Gerontology and Long-Term Care yielded a CTO just shy of 40 percent. Although enrollment decreased in the next year, administrative expenses increased, and this trend continued for the next several years. From 1999–2000 to 2002–2003, Gerontology operated with a negative CTO, incurring expenses greater than the revenue generated by student enrollment. During this period, correspondence between the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the program’s Director indicates concern for the program’s viability, and although we are unable to locate documentation, it is apparent that some time in 2003 the Sunset Provision was invoked. The final teach-out year of the MA in Gerontology occurred in 2004–2005; unfortunately, Naropa is unable to find copies of any correspondence with the HLC around the Gerontology program. (See the Introduction for a list of correspondence on program changes and terminations that Naropa has initiated with the HLC since 2000.)

Although the Board has not specified the application of the CTO to nondegree programming, Academic Affairs employed a similar profit-and-loss analysis when deciding to reduce program offerings by the School of Extended Studies (ES). From 2004–2005 through 2007–2008, ES ran an annual deficit in excess of $200,000 (RR, AA-69). In July 2008, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Interim Director of Extended Studies submitted a proposal to the President to redesign ES, first by reducing staffing and the extensive variety of programs offered, and second by revamping ES with an emphasis on high-impact continuing education certificate programs in lieu of weekend or short courses and workshops (RR, AA-22). As of January 2009, ES has operated with only one staff member, primarily charged with operations and logistics, and has offered two of its certificate programs: Authentic Leadership and the Wilderness Therapy Symposium. ES is on target to end FY2009–2010 in the black (RR, AA-24).

In brief, senior management maintains a close eye on the revenues and expenses for academic programs. Using a formula established by the Board of Trustees, Academic Affairs works with department-based faculty leaders to ensure operations in line with the CTO, though the 40 percent minimum is somewhat malleable. Mission fit is, of course, another factor in considering the viability of programs.

As the University moves forward with its recently announced budget initiative, the role of CTO analysis will become pivotal. Some on campus have observed that Naropa’s nonacademic or overhead expenses require revenue centers to generate a CTO between 55 and 60 percent. As budget reductions occur for FY2010–2011, the case for altering the minimum CTO permanently may become clearer.

Naropa’s high tuition dependency requires the University to maintain realistic enrollment management planning. In fall 2005, the University experienced a significant drop in actual enrollment from fall projected numbers and was foreseeing another significant drop in graduate enrollment for fall 2006, causing deep reactive budgeting to absorb the loss of tuition revenue over the next few years (see Table 2.10). The University has also experienced significant fluctuations in enrollment since the establishment of the Core College, or full four-year program, in 1999.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.10. Annual Total Undergraduate Enrollment Fall Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Fall Enrollment Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* This figure was subsequently adjusted down because of the economy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A major concern and challenge to the University has been how to secure a stronger financial position, recognizing that we will continue to be dependent on tuition revenue for some time to come. Recent discussions in Senior Staff have led to the observation that the University may have too quickly responded to enrollment spikes with permanent additions to the budget, and that a plan for meeting the educational and support needs of students in any given year might include temporary staffing. Enrollment growth as modeled by the Strategic Plan is a second, long-term response to the University’s financial health.

As described above, the Strategic Plan calls for two approaches to institutional growth: (1) increases in residential enrollment commensurate with current capacities of our facilities; and (2) increases in low-residency online programs, which are assumed not to tax facilities to the same degree. Also noted, however, is the fact that the undergraduate target was established in light of a dramatic increase in applications for fall 2007 enrollment, which has proved not to be sustainable. The Enrollment Management Plan establishes more sustainable annual baselines and growth targets (RR, AA-36). The Enrollment Management Team continues to use the Strategic Plan’s enrollment goals as targets but is also looking into selectivity and quality of the applicant pool so as to improve retention and educational quality. At the graduate level, the 3–5 percent targeted increase is considered a means to return to pre-2007 enrollment patterns. It is clear to both
Academic Affairs and Admissions that a few of our cornerstone graduate programs have lost their competitive edge and, with an increase of similar programs at other universities, enrollments at Naropa have declined. The drop in graduate enrollment numbers is also attributed to the closing of two graduate programs (Gerontology in spring 2004, Music Therapy in spring 2007). The MA in Interdisciplinary Studies admitted its last cohort of students in fall 2006, with the final teach-out taking place in December 2009. (As of this writing, we await confirmation from the Registrar of this fact through a final degree audit.) With modest investments in faculty, curriculum development, and marketing, it is believed that graduate residential enrollments will not only meet 2004 highs but exceed them within a four- to five-year period.

Table 2.11 shows graduate enrollment from 2000 to 2009. The increased enrollment numbers during the period from 2003 to 2006 are attributed to an overlap of new programs, closed programs still in a teach-out process, and a strong economy during that time period. Growth in our graduate low-residency online offerings, as specified in the Strategic Plan and Enrollment Management Plan, is dependent on the development of new programs as well as minor stabilization of enrollments in current programs. Improved recruitment and marketing, as well as minor curricular changes, are planned for those programs not currently reaching their enrollment potential or those below their enrollment high point.

### Table 2.11. Annual Total Graduate Enrollment (Fall Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Block Tuition Structure

Prior to fall 2005, Naropa charged tuition to both graduate and undergraduate students based on the number of credit hours for which they registered. Graduate students continue to be charged on this basis. However, in the 2005–2006 academic year, the decision was made to charge undergraduate students on the basis of “block tuition.” In analyses of benchmark institutions, Naropa’s senior management came to believe that other undergraduate institutions charge tuition on a block basis. Under block tuition, students who take between 12 and 18 credit hours per semester are charged the same price. Students taking fewer than 12 credits pay by the credit hour, while students taking more than 18 credits pay the block price plus a per-credit-hour cost for each additional hour.

### Table 2.12. Undergraduate 1-Year Retention Rates by Class Level (Full Time and Part Time)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Students</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman Students</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Naropa made this change for a number of reasons, including:

1. Block tuition enables students to take more credit hours each semester without additional costs. This enables students to graduate in a shorter time period and therefore allows them to incur less debt.

2. Most of our competitors also charge tuition based on a block formula. This makes it easier for students to compare the cost of Naropa education to that of other schools.

3. Adopting block tuition increases the total revenue generated by Naropa’s undergraduate programs. This enables Naropa to increase the undergraduate discount rate to approximately 29 percent, a rate that is comparable to the discount rate at benchmark and competitor institutions.

There are a number of questions raised by the University’s adoption of block tuition, such as whether students have indeed been able to graduate with less debt and in a shorter period of time. These questions, as well as the impact of block tuition on total student enrollment for the University, have not yet been investigated. However, it is anticipated that such questions will be addressed during the current budget balancing initiative.

### Retention

Over the past five years, Naropa has undertaken focused efforts to understand which students withdraw from the University prior to graduation and their reasons for doing so (RR, ADM-4 and 5; see also Criterion 5). The University’s retention rates fluctuate marginally from year to year as a whole; however, the rates fluctuate more significantly from year to year by class level, with undeclared students and those in their first year of college life being more vulnerable to early exit. Table 2.12 indicates these multiyear retention statistics.
Beginning in fall 2007, the University instituted various initiatives, resources, and curricular adjustments to increase student persistence and to stabilize retention rates, most notably a two-year mentoring program that began during Orientation Week and connected students with Core Faculty for their first semester at Naropa. In addition, residential life programming was enhanced, and the Office of Undergraduate Advising initiated an Academic Support Program to provide counseling and tutoring for students struggling academically (see Criterion 3 for further discussion of this program).

Comparable analysis on graduate enrollment and retention indicates some departments experience modest retention fluctuation, but by and large this is not a significant problem (Table 2.13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department (or Program)</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contemplative Education (low-residency)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemplative Psychotherapy</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Leadership</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Tibetan Buddhism</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Tibetan Buddhism with Language</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Studies MA</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Studies with Language</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Divinity</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic Counseling</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater: Lecoq Based</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater: Contemporary Performance</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Counseling: Art Therapy</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Counseling: Counseling</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Counseling: Wilderness Therapy</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Psychology (low-residency)</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transpersonal Psychology: ECOC Concentration</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Writing (low-residency)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing &amp; Poetics</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* Environmental Leadership did not enroll a class.

Prior to January 2010, retention efforts were charged to the Ad Hoc Retention Committee and across a number of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs units. As part of the work of the Expanded Enrollment Management Team, which investigated but did not come to firm conclusions about the major determinants of student attrition (see Criterion 5), the Vice President for Academic Affairs determined that a more coordinated effort was required. Requesting funds from the jump-start Strategic Plan budget, Academic Affairs has appointed a Retention Coordinator to oversee this new, more encompassing initiative. This individual is charged with developing an early alert system, which collects information from attendance patterns, faculty, and advising and residential life staff to identify students having difficulty adjusting to college life. The Coordinator will also help shape the system-wide set of responses to students' academic, financial, and mental health difficulties. Retention goals have been set modestly for the first two years of this initiative to allow it to develop the level of coordinated interventions that are called for and to determine a comprehensive methodology for collecting data both about the characteristics of students at risk, as well as the interventions most appropriate to assisting each such group (RR, AA-36).

Financial Aid

The University has a strong commitment to provide aid to students who could not otherwise afford a Naropa education. With the exception of one endowed graduate scholarship, the University provides need-based financial aid and has not instituted a merit-based system. Financial aid is provided to students via a number of sources, including operating funds, expendable gifts and grants, endowment income, government grants, and loans. Seventy-three percent of Naropa students receive some type of financial aid. In 2008–2009, 45 percent of Naropa undergraduates received Pell Grants; 2009–2010 estimates show an increase to approximately 53 percent. Federal work-study is granted to 42 percent of our students, and 69 percent are awarded federal loans (excluding PLUS loans).

Table 2.14 shows figures for total institutional financial aid in dollars, percent of revenue, and percent of tuition and fees. Institutional aid funded from the University’s operating budget is calculated at 20 percent of projected graduate and undergraduate combined tuition revenue; this translates into 29 percent of undergraduate projected tuition revenue, and approximately 8 percent of graduate projected revenue. Aid increases in actual dollars as a percentage of gross tuition revenue. During the past two years, the Board of Trustees has authorized an increase in aid beyond the 20 percent mark in order to react to changing economic times affecting students’ ability to afford a Naropa education.
Table 2.14. Total Institutional Financial Aid Awarded and Percent of Revenue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Total Institutional Aid Awarded</th>
<th>Percent of Overall Revenue</th>
<th>Percent of Tuition and Fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004–2005</td>
<td>$1,931,323</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–2006</td>
<td>$3,107,873</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>$2,999,996</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007–2008</td>
<td>$3,692,700</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008–2009</td>
<td>$3,866,111</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Donations, Grants, and Giving

Total contributions made to Naropa during the past four years increased from $1,095,095 in 2005–2006 to $1,318,816 in 2008–2009. In 2008–2009, the University received a total of $1,318,816 in gifts, which exceeds the original goal, although this was due in large part to a series of anonymous bequest payments ($534,412) in that year that were restricted to jump-start programs. The amount is more than that in any other non-campaign year, and represents the largest total in Naropa’s history. Of the total amount, $685,784, or 52 percent of the total, was unrestricted, enabling the University to support its operations through the Annual Fund and build its strategic investment pool through the jump-start fund. The remaining amount, $633,031, or 48 percent, came to the University as restricted gifts and grants.

The Annual Fund goal originally contained in the University's FY2008–2009 budget is $250,000. In light of the economic crisis that gripped the United States that year, the Office of Advancement revised this goal to $205,000 in February 2009, and the Office of Business and Finance lowered its budget expectations to match this revision. Donors eventually contributed a total of $201,908, a drop of $15,906 from the previous year's total. Annual Fund giving has been between $200,000 and $250,000 for many years, with the five-year average at $231,868.

The University's corporate and foundation funding, alumni giving, and other organizational and individual sources of funding are not as balanced as the national norms for higher education. As part of the Office of Advancement's planning, it is seeking to diversify sources of funding (RR, PR-16).

The Strategic Plan calls for increasing the total number of donors at all levels and for building the financial capacity and engagement of the Board (RR, SP-9). The Office of Advancement has begun implementation of planning and operations to achieve these strategic goals (RR, ADV-20).
Criterion Two

In spring 2009, Academic Affairs and Cauldron established the Faculty Salary Equity Task Force to examine service years as a basis for future salary adjustments. In fall 2009, the University commissioned Mercer Consulting to study salary compression and develop a mathematical model for addressing it using one internal variable (years of service at the University within each of the three ranks). Mercer’s report will be available in late January 2010 and a modified version (deleting personal information) will be available to the Peer Review Team in March.

A 2007 faculty survey explored, among other things, the impact of low salary on professional development and engagement in the faculty’s professional disciplines (RR, AA-37). Of faculty members responding, 89.7 percent strongly agreed that low salaries limited their capacity to engage in professional development, and 6.9 percent agreed somewhat with this statement. Fifty-five percent strongly agreed with the statement, “I do a lot of work outside my Naropa faculty position” (with another 17.2 percent agreeing somewhat). Eighty-two percent agreed strongly or somewhat that they work outside their Naropa faculty positions because their Naropa salaries are low.

Current efforts to address faculty professional development are being funded from the 10 percent efficiency savings described in the Introduction. During the fall 2009 semester, 29 faculty and staff attended professional conferences and workshops through this funding, an unprecedented investment in the University’s personnel and in our capacity to implement the many pieces of the Academic Plan (see Criteria 3 and 4). A research initiative focused on diversity in the disciplines will begin in spring 2010 and will support ten faculty members over two years to conduct research on this topic from within their academic discipline, engage in curriculum transformation projects, and attend professional conferences.

When attention is turned to non-teaching staff, Naropa’s internal data indicate that it currently has 123 full-time staff and approximately 36 part-time staff. Using the IPEDS formula, this equates to 134 FTE. Staff was reduced through a hiring freeze in FY2005–2006 and FY2006–2007. It was further reduced in 2008–2009 when Extended Studies programming was reduced for redesign.

This number of staff FTE equates to approximately 6.8 students per staff FTE. Compared to our benchmark institutions, which have a ratio of 10.9 students per FTE, Naropa has considerably more staffing per student. The Budget Resource Group is examining staffing numbers, looking for staffing efficiencies as the institution faces staff reductions that will result from the budget initiative.

This will mean close analysis of how the budget initiative’s goal of institutional right-sizing will impact staff FTE. This will also include an examination of ways in which efficiency can be increased and an analysis of work procedures or tasks that need to be redesigned or eliminated. The Strategic Plan indicates that our current staffing levels are adequate and that the University will be able to accommodate enrollment growth without having to grow staff proportionately. This will need to be monitored as the recently announced budget reduction initiative advances.

The University has not comprehensively assessed the effectiveness of our staffing structures and workflows. Through our strategic planning process, staff opinion and feedback were collected through focus groups and surveys. These data indicate low staff morale—a combined sense of being undervalued, overworked or overburdened, and underpaid. Staff also reported lack of institutional support to achieve fully their job responsibilities because of poor technology, lack of communication, lack of clear policies and systems, and limited professional staff development (RR, SP-9). A report prepared by the Staff Executive Committee further supports these findings (RR, OTH-11). The University has hired key Human Resources professionals to address these problems and concerns. In addition to the Director of Human Resources, the Benefits Specialist, and the Employment, Training, and EE Relations Specialist are fundamental to ensuring staff support.

Still, significant challenges to the Human Resources infrastructure remain. The payroll system adopted in 2008 has required an inordinate amount of time on the part of both the HR and Business and Finance staff to address problems. In fall 2009, the University purchased a Human Resource information system and payroll platform to strengthen its hiring processes, HR information management, and payroll processes. It is anticipated that this new system will be operational in spring 2010.

Naropa University has buildings, classes, and people spread across three campus sites within a five-mile radius of each other—the Arapahoe, Paramita, and Nalanda Campuses. Although the University avoids using the term “main cam-

3 See the Introduction for discussion of a London site, which hosts the MFA in Lecoq Based Actor-Created Theater.
Criterion Two

Preparation for the Future

pus” to refer to Arapahoe, it is true that most administrative functions (including the work of the majority of senior managers and their offices) and many weekday all-constituency meetings are held there. Snow Lion, a student residential building, is located a few blocks from the Arapahoe Campus.

With the exception of the Administration Building, which was built from the ground up, campus buildings have been acquired and renovated for instructional and administrative use, thereby requiring some retrofitting along with maintenance, upkeep, and repair. The structural needs of existing buildings, along with the complexities of operations spread across multiple sites, have prompted ongoing discussion among the Board of Trustees about consolidation.

The Strategic Plan considers existing classroom space to be adequate for the number of resident students currently at the University and those likely to be enrolled within the next five years. This assumes greater use of existing spaces during early morning, evening, and weekend scheduling. Perhaps more relevant for the current discussion is the adequacy and quality of existing physical spaces for meeting the demands of our curriculum. A preliminary survey of programmatic needs for space indicates that many of our specialized courses (e.g., music, theater, and yoga) do not have appropriate facilities. The University also suffers from a lack of faculty and staff offices. Further, until recently, students severely lacked common space to socialize, eat, and study.

In recent years, major improvements have been made to address ongoing needs resulting in improvements to faculty, staff, and student satisfaction with the physical environment (RR, OPS-2 and 3). These improvements include the following:

- An outdoor green sitting and contemplative area was built at the Paramita Campus.
- An outdoor green area was expanded on the Arapahoe Campus.
- The student lounge on the Arapahoe Campus, opposite the café, was remodeled and expanded.
- A Student Center is currently being remodeled in the lower level of the Administration Building.
- The Sycamore Building has been painted and outfitted with new desks.

In 2005, Dober, Lidsky, Craig, and Associates, Inc., conducted an assessment of Naropa’s programs, buildings, and environs of each of the campuses and recommended a planning process that would result in a comprehensive campus master plan (RR, OPS-4). The University decided that moving forward was premature at that point in time in the absence of an academic plan. Since then, facilities modifications have been based on smaller improvements or facelifts of campus buildings.

The development of the Strategic Plan and the Academic Plan clarifies the needs and opportunities for facilities and provides the foundation for campus master planning. Taken together, the two plans call for attracting more students, building a greater sense of community, and providing greater opportunity for faculty and staff to interact with students. In summer 2009, Art Lidsky (a principal in the aforementioned firm) visited campus, at the invitation of outgoing President Coburn and incoming President Lord, in order to review the University’s progress on institutional planning. It was agreed that renovation projects that add to the institution’s “curb appeal” should be pursued and that funding for a comprehensive master plan should be sought.

Technology Resources

The Office of Information Technology provides the University with technology resources needed to support our educational mission. These services include implementing and maintaining the computer-based hardware, software, and network infrastructure. Nevertheless, Naropa clearly remains behind the curve in meeting current needs, much less keeping pace with changing technology. A frequent complaint among senior managers and their respective staff is the inefficiency that results from the use of multiple operational systems, many of which are only minimally compatible with the University’s enterprise system. Escalating expectations challenge our current information technology infrastructure and services. (A discussion of support for technology in teaching and learning settings can be found in Criterion 3.)

During the past five years, little progress has been made in addressing the infrastructure technology needs and recommendations articulated by the Academic Technology Committee. A 2004 survey administered to faculty and staff indicated the need for technology improvements from desk support help to classroom technology. Although several identified needs have been met, such as the desk support help, a master calendar, and a single Naropa University website, the broader infrastructure needs remain. Additionally, the Information Technology Department identifies space, staffing, and funding as significant challenges to its ability to provide services (RR, IT-1).

As part of the major facilities and infrastructure investments, the Strategic Plan identifies long-term planning for the University’s information technology infrastructure. A Technology Advisory Committee, appointed by the President in
Criterion Two

Preparation for the Future

2009, serves as an institution-wide body to advise Senior Staff on the business and academic value of all information technology projects, the cost of implementation, and the impact to the resources of the University. Its central charge is long-range planning for maintaining and updating technology. A major audit of existing functions and a consultancy for sequenced growth are now under discussion by Senior Staff.

In summary, we believe that Naropa University is comprehensively working to address its major concerns and challenges of securing a stronger sustainable financial position to support the best quality of educational offerings. Strengthening our financial resources and prudent management of those resources are key to our long-term success. Through the strategic planning process, we have identified institutional areas that face challenges and have integrated or redirected planning efforts to yield stronger outcomes. These challenges include a modest base from which to grow a major fundraising initiative, lack of resources to upgrade our technology infrastructure, and an imperative to balance our efforts to recruit additional students and retain those already matriculated. The University recognizes its tuition dependency and is working toward increased enrollments and improved retention. The Office of Advancement identifies target goals and opportunities through its departmental level planning efforts but remains challenged by the downturn in the economy.

Most important, the University is seeking to improve the work culture and compensation for faculty and staff, thereby aiming to invest in our human resources. However, we recognize that achieving this objective will require time, investments, and institutional reorganization. Investment dollars in the form of the jump-start budget are limited, thus producing a protracted period of assessment and prioritization of the multiple actions delineated by the Strategic Plan. At the time of this writing, the lack of resources may delay the University’s ability to move forward in technology planning and campus master planning, both crucial to our functions and to addressing some of our challenges. Although an initial prioritization of Academic Affairs and Admissions needs has resulted in jump-start funding in 2009-2010, the limitations of the budget mean that some of the curricular and enrollment goals may be stretched over a longer period of time than suggested by the Strategic Plan.

Finally, as mentioned in this section, Naropa University is in the initial stages of a process to reduce the operating budget and to right-size the University to assure future financial sustainability. The impact of this budget initiative will be monitored, in terms of both the University’s continued operations and its capacity to implement the Strategic Plan. The goal of the budget initiative is to correct a structural deficit so that enrollment and revenue growth derived from the Strategic Plan can be used to advance the University.

CORE COMPONENT 2C – The institution’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.

Academic Assessment

As mentioned in the Introduction, the hiring of a new Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of the Faculty in 2006 and the hiring of an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (.50 FTE) with assessment experience just prior to that were important for strengthening Naropa’s ability to focus on student learning outcomes assessment and academic program assessment. These developments were accompanied by a reorganization of the Office of Academic Affairs. Two positions (Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, and Assistant Dean of Budget and Academic Support) were created in 2007 to support the development of learning assessment plans and financial analyses. In fall 2009, an Assistant Dean of New Programs and Strategic Initiatives was hired with the goal of assist-
ing departments in meeting the curricular, enrollment, financial investment, and marketing components of the Strategic Plan.

Though the presence of good assessment serves as a driver for many institutional decisions, the continuing challenge faced by the University is to build a culture that values self-evaluation and does not engage in assessment simply for the sake of compliance. At a minimum, the assessment initiatives in Academic Affairs have begun to influence institution-wide practices. For example, the Office of Information Technology has modeled its own self-study on the Department Systematic Review (DSR), and the Expanded Enrollment Management Team used the DSR as part of its construction of the enrollment road map. The Strategic Plan implementation provides an opportunity for the University to develop institutional performance measures in a systematic manner.

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment**

Since the last HLC Comprehensive Visit in 2000, the University’s history with learning outcomes assessment can be divided into two periods. From 2000 through the middle of 2006, Naropa experienced inconsistent progress with outcomes assessment. It struggled to sustain any effective practice as evidenced by the 2004 Focused Visit and the 2007 Monitoring Reports. However, beginning in 2006, the University has engaged with assessment earnestly and has initiated deliberate efforts directed toward strengthening the quality of the faculty’s assessment of student learning outcomes. In 2007, recognizing the need for a unifying policy, the Office of Academic Affairs developed a comprehensive three-year program designed to assist departments in: (1) building capacity for student learning outcomes assessment; (2) developing and implementing three-year assessment plans; and (3) analyzing data and filing reports on student learning outcomes and associated curriculum modifications. This program provides a framework for assessment, definitions, requirements, guidelines, feedback, schedules, and guidance for program improvement.

Detailed discussion of our accomplishments in the area of student learning outcomes assessment can be found in Criterion 3. Here it is useful to note that, as of fall 2009, 65 percent of academic assessment units have outcomes assessment plans that have been vetted and fully approved by Academic Affairs, and 70 percent of those have produced evaluation reports in the third year (2009–2010) of the initiative. Compared to assessment plans evaluated three years ago, these current plans reflect qualitative criteria established by Academic Affairs for best practice and effectiveness. A few departments have also begun curricular modifications in response to their assessment findings.

The DSR process began in fall 2006 as an effort to establish an annual cycle of review that integrates departmental planning, budgeting, self-evaluation, enrollment history, and student learning outcomes assessment. Developing this collaboration between Academic Affairs and departments was further aimed at system-wide capacity-building—in other words, ensuring that department leadership felt heard by senior academic administrators through a process of continuous information-sharing and feedback and fostering decision-making practices based on a common understanding of University values and priorities, outcomes assessments, and financial benchmarks (RR, AA-52).

Prior to 2006, the University had no tradition of comprehensive program review or multiyear budgeting in the academic departments. Frequent complaints over resource distribution and a lack of transparency plagued Academic Affairs. To remedy these problems and to develop a culture of continuous planning, the DSR was initially implemented among the University’s degree-granting departments. Since then, the Allen Ginsberg Library, the Naropa Writing Center, the Office of Undergraduate Advising, and two of the certificate programs offered through the School of Extended Studies have participated in DSRs.

The DSR is structured on an annual cycle, in which academic departments prepare a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, student learning outcomes assessment documents (three-year plan, annual implementation plan, or final report), and a budget request emphasizing funding needed to implement program plans. In turn, Academic Affairs prepares department-specific enrollment and retention data, results of the University’s Student Satisfaction Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and financial analysis of the contribution to overhead (CTO), along with some cross-department comparative data. Throughout the fall and/or spring semesters, these documents are reviewed in a face-to-face meeting with each department and its representatives (Chair, Administrative Director, and invited faculty) and the Academic Affairs team. Prior to each meeting, a preliminary set of questions is communicated to the departments along with an agenda. Each meeting identifies follow-up action items, and a follow-up summary and minutes are produced and jointly reviewed by Academic Affairs and departments and become part of the permanent file (RR, AA-52).4

4 Three years of DSR materials are included in the virtual Resource Room. These materials are organized by year and, within each year, by department or degree program. Within each department/program folder are the separate documents that make up the DSR: department SWOT analyses; budget requests; CTO analyses from Business and Finance; enrollment and retention trends from Admissions and Student Administrative Services; the results of Student Satisfaction
A meta-analysis of the DSR was developed and implemented a year after the first round. This was designed to ensure that progress is being made toward meeting the DSR goals. A DSR Outcomes Grid, which includes perspective generated by the Academic Affairs team during its own debriefing retreats, as well as the results of an anonymous survey of participating Chairs and Administrative Directors, is used to track progress and to make annual modifications. For example, a meta-view comparison of the DSR outcomes between 2006–2007 and 2008–2009 reflects: (1) increased understanding of the purpose and value of program review among chairs and administrative directors; (2) increased awareness of data utilization; (3) expression of greater need for multiyear planning; (4) recognition of the increased need for collaboration and communication across departments; and (5) the existence of strengthened communication between departments and Academic Affairs. Though pleased with the cultural shift and capacity development that are taking place within departments, Academic Affairs also considers areas of needed improvement in the DSR process when conducting the meta-analysis (RR, AA-52, Academic Affairs).

The DSR is also flexible enough to adjust to exigencies of the moment. For example, the 2008–2009 cycle required a splitting of resource and learning outcomes discussions in order to accommodate modeling of each department’s 10 percent average class size increase in fall 2009. Focus on the final stages of the accreditation self-study has led Academic Affairs to move the 2009–2010 DSR to the spring semester. A series of preliminary meetings took place between departments and the Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction in fall 2009 to review progress on outcomes work, and the goal of the 2009–2010 DSR to be held in the spring is to work toward greater integration of student outcomes assessment with budget requests, cross-department resource comparisons, and alignment with the new Academic Plan.

Academic Affairs also hopes to expand DSR involvement to include Cauldron (the faculty executive committee) or another governance body charged with oversight of resource planning. As the University moves toward institutional and financial restructuring under the leadership of our new President, the involvement of faculty committees in the DSR will become more imperative.

Surveys, etc. Materials for 2009–2010 are in progress. In addition, the folder for each class year contains an Academic Affairs folder, with the results of our annual meta-analysis of the DSR process, survey results from Chairs and Administrative Directors who participated in that year’s DSR, and summative outcomes assessment reports. The original hard copies of the DSR materials will be placed in a physical Resource Room during the March 2010 site visit.
Criterion Two

The Enrollment Management Plan (Part II of the Academic Plan, RR, AA-36) employs data from both Admissions and Student Administrative Services to articulate a road map for enrollment growth. The documents that were examined included data on the enrollment funnel (statistics for each program on the number of initial inquiries through to application, admission and matriculation) and retention, and analyses of when enrollment projections were or were not reached in any given year. The EEMT created baseline enrollment figures from these data and a four-year plan for enrollment growth beyond this base.

Institutional Assessment Surveys

As noted earlier, the University does not have a formally designated institutional research office whose role is to gather and disseminate institutional data. The Office of Student Administrative Services assumes a quasi-institutional research function but lacks appropriate staffing to engage fully in comprehensive institutional research. Nonetheless, Student Administrative Services administers two national surveys, the Higher Education Research Institute’s Cooperative Institutional Research Program Survey (CIRP) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), as well as the Student Satisfaction Survey, an institutionally based survey. With the exception of Academic Affairs and the Admissions Office, the campus makes limited use of data from these surveys—further evidence of the University’s need to improve its generation and use of institutional data. (See Criteria 3 and 4 for a discussion of how CIRP, NSSE, and Student Satisfaction data shaped the Academic Plan and Enrollment Management Plan.)

Other Institutional Assessment Practices

Other types of data are generated and analyzed for specific purposes, such as a Housing Survey and Orientation Questionnaire administered by Student Affairs. The University values input from its campus constituencies, and it is common practice to use surveys, community forums, and Town Halls to gather qualitative data for planning. In spring 2009, former President Coburn used a campus-wide world café process to seek community input on challenges to balancing the budget that year. Since taking office in July 2009, President Lord has convened numerous listening circles to gather information from key constituencies on institutional strengths and challenges (see Criterion 5 for discussion and further examples).

Standard institutional practices of collecting, disseminating, and reviewing data are done for budgeting purposes, setting enrollment targets, collecting demographic information, and reporting to IPEDS. For the most part, these practices are conducted by individual departments and shared throughout the University only as needed.

Standing and specially appointed committees and task forces are often charged with the responsibility for data collection, analysis, and development of recommendations to the University on specific institutional issues or concerns. For example, the University Budget Committee (UBC) is charged with reviewing and assessing the annual operating budget and making recommendations to the Senior Staff and President for the following year’s budget. A recent presidential appointment, the Budget Resource Group (BRG), is charged with assessing and analyzing proposals for initiating a major budget reduction in the 2010–2011 budget and serving as a think tank resource to the UBC and Senior Staff.

Under the leadership of the current Director, who was appointed in 2007, the Office of Human Resources has worked diligently to standardize staff evaluation processes, requiring supervisors to perform personnel evaluations on an annual basis. Another example of Human Resources’ contributions toward effective and continuous institutional improvement is the Exit Interview that it conducts with all employees who resign (see Criterion 5).

Finally, as needed, the University contracts for external consulting to perform studies and offer advice in areas beyond the capacity of the institution. For example, in fall 2009, Academic Affairs and Human Resources engaged a consulting firm to conduct a study on internal equity and faculty compensation. These findings will inform decisions about faculty salary adjustments for spring 2010. In spring 2009, Academic Affairs contracted with a higher education research firm, Eduventures, to conduct market-based studies to inform new program development for both continuing education and graduate education as set forth by the Strategic Plan. Two studies have been completed on behalf of the University, and a third is in development (RR, AA-42–44).

In conclusion, it is our belief that Naropa University is improving the development and use of assessment protocols as part of an effort of self-evaluation and data-driven decision-making. The most significant strides made in the last four years can be seen in Academic Affairs, which has turned the corner on learning outcomes assessment work and inaugurated a rigorous department assessment and planning process known as the Department Systematic Review. The value accorded the standardized course and teacher evaluation instrument is uncertain on campus, and as Academic Affairs continues its efforts to incorporate best practices in decision-making, the need for a robust and University-relevant evaluation tool will require more earnest attention than it has heretofore been given.
The role that strategic planning played in setting the University on a path of comprehensive data collection and analysis should also be noted. The Strategic Plan results from both internal and external data sources, and a sophisticated analysis of the relationship of Naropa’s financial situation to that of several similar institutions. Further, additional documents developed as the result of the Strategic Plan, including the Academic Plan and Enrollment Management Plan, have made use of both internal assessment and external benchmarking.

In order to maintain this momentum, the University now has the opportunity to develop institutional performance assessment and continuous improvement as priorities. Implementation of the Strategic Plan in particular requires coordination across academic and administrative units, and studious tracking of institutional progress.

CORE COMPONENT 2D – All levels of planning align with the institution’s mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.

Planning documents show evidence of Naropa’s awareness of the relationships among educational quality, student learning, and the diverse external circumstances that impact our own functioning and the world we are preparing students to enter. These are the twin goals of our Mission Statement. In related fashion, the strategic planning process established a broad understanding of the multiple levels required of the institution to align with and implement the University’s mission. Planning documents exist on the University level (in the form of the Strategic Plan), in all academic departments (through the Department Systematic Review), and in many administrative units, which invoke and work toward alignment with the institution’s mission. The discussion of Criterion 1 provides evidence of the extent to which the University mission is known by various constituencies and serves as the basis for the alignment of operational functions.

University processes allow for an ongoing monitoring and revising of goals when necessary, thus enabling our continuous efforts to fulfill the institutional mission. For example, at the same time that the Board of Trustees approved the Strategic Plan in fall 2009, Senior Staff—in consultation with our consulting firm—agreed upon an Action Plan to guide various offices’ implementation of appropriate strategies. The Action Plan was subject to a monthly review and updating on progress through fall 2009 (RR, SP-20). Our new President has indicated that, as of January 2010, the newly appointed Chief Administrative Officer will be responsible for continuous review of the progress of the Strategic Plan.

Similarly, the work of Academic Affairs and the Enrollment Management Team to create the Academic Plan and the Enrollment Management Plan resulted from coordination and integration of data from the DSR and Admissions statistics with broad goals established by the Mission Statement. The projection that it will take the University longer to reach enrollment targets than defined by the Strategic Plan results from a more careful and systematic approach to new program development than previously undertaken by the University. We wish to highlight the following accomplishments in support of this maturation of our academic planning process in the last four years.

- The Peace Studies BA, approved by the HLC in 2007, is one example of a degree program that the new Academic Affairs administration shepherded through the authorization process. In the intervening months from the first submission of Naropa’s application to the Focused Visit, the University scrupulously developed budget forecasts for the new program and put the curriculum through a careful resource analysis and outcomes planning process. Since the major began enrolling students, Academic Affairs has continued to monitor both financial and curricular progress (RR, A-66).

- Working with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the faculty developed a new process for curriculum development in 2007, first by establishing separate graduate and undergraduate curriculum committees, and second by clarifying the required input from various administrative offices based on the extent of institutional impact curriculum proposals might have (see Criteria 3 and 4).

- The University has allocated strategic plan implementation (jump-start) funds to appoint an additional Assistant Dean of New Programs and Strategic Initiatives. This position oversees the external program review process, solicitation and analysis of new program proposals, and alignment across curriculum, marketing strategies and messages, and the University’s mission.

- Academic Affairs has begun to contract for market research as part of its consideration of new degree and continuing education program offerings. The latest commissioned study, an examination of summer school programing, explicitly seeks to know about other institutions that offer religious or spiritually based courses.

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Plan and to integrate the faculty and curriculum across general education, majors, minors, and elective opportunities. The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education heads this committee and will submit a report and final proposal to make the committee permanent or to suggest changes.

In brief, the institution-wide planning process that began with the revision of the Mission Statement and encompasses the subsequent development of the Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, and Enrollment Management Plan demonstrates strong alignment. This planning process also evidences robust and meaningful collaboration among Trustees, Senior Staff, faculty, and other staff. In all cases, it is the Mission Statement that serves as both inspiration for, and guidance of, further planning activities.

Summary and Future Directions

In preparing for a sustainable future, Naropa has endeavored to build a culture of data-informed planning, establishment of achievable actions, and accountability. Though the various planning activities in the past several years have been both collaborative and transparent, they have also been focused in particular groups or committees. Whether ad hoc or existing, these groups or committees have been responsible for careful generation and review of data, weighing of multiple options, and creation of suitable action plans. Beginning with a revision to the Mission Statement, the University has produced a ten-year Strategic Plan, a curriculum-focused Academic Plan—Part I, and an enrollment-focused Academic Plan—Part II.

Our biggest challenge is the allocation of financial resources capable of meeting the regular operational needs of the University (including adequate compensation for all employees) and, as the Strategic Plan is implemented through the Academic Plan, the identification of additional jump-start funds to improve the curriculum. Recognition of the inadequacy of our resource base is a major factor that shaped the aspirations of the Strategic Plan, including the goal of significant growth in enrollment and philanthropy. Furthermore, this recognition has led to the recently announced budget reduction initiative, about which more will be known when the Peer Review Team visits campus in March 2010.

The absence of a strong resource base leads to inevitable disillusionment about space and technology planning. It is generally accepted that Naropa’s future rests in our unequivocally delivering an education that is both “distinctive” and “excellent,” thus giving priority to the implementation of the Academic Plan. At the same time, there is no doubt that the inadequacy of instructional spaces commensurate with the curriculum, the shortage of faculty offices and student meeting spaces, and the inefficiency resulting from our use of multiple information systems across the campus, must be attended to.

In brief, the University is securing a stable future for itself by implementing a Strategic Plan that is both clear and flexible. At the same time, the University must continue to endeavor to balance and prioritize competing demands on its limited resources, as it maintains existing operations and undertakes new initiatives. The capacity to plan and balance is a key feature of Naropa’s emerging maturity.
Criterion Three
Student Learning and Effective Teaching

The institution provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

In analyzing Naropa University’s effectiveness with regard to learning and teaching in the context of its mission, the institution contends that considerable progress has been made since the last accreditation process. Major accomplishments include the establishment of a comprehensive system to plan and implement assessment of student learning across all degree programs and academic support offices; the creation of the Department Systematic Review process, which brings academic departments and the Office of Academic Affairs into regular evaluation and planning sessions around student learning, departmental goals, and resource allocation; and the implementation of the Strategic Plan through the development of an Academic Plan to guide curricular decision-making. An explicit and inclusive process for curriculum approval has been put in place, and Academic Affairs has hired staff to serve as liaisons to academic departments, thus providing training and guidance in learning outcomes assessment and assisting departments in curriculum planning and budget analysis for new degree programs.

Our commitment to mission-centered and effective teaching and learning can also be seen in increases to the ethnic, racial, and gender diversity of the Ranked Faculty, enabling the institution to deliver education that is more cognizant of multicultural issues, and in increases to the percentage of teaching delivered by Ranked Faculty in comparison with Adjunct Faculty. The Strategic Plan and the newly adopted Academic Plan lay a foundation for further student learning outcomes assessment work, including the current review of the Core (general education) Curriculum, which will result in a modified curriculum and a robust assessment plan.

Areas of weakness must also be noted in this context. First, the University administers a teaching evaluation instrument each semester but does not yet have a system in place for analyzing the data or using findings in a formative manner (e.g., for faculty development purposes). Low salaries for Ranked Faculty mean that many faculty members supplement their income with outside teaching, con-
History of Assessment at Naropa University

Although Naropa is in an early developmental stage in terms of learning outcomes assessment, it is poised for significant progress in this area by having put in place staffing, training, and requirements for programs. These requirements include department participation in a three-year cycle of planning, implementing, and employing/responding to learning outcomes assessment data. In its assessment history, Naropa has struggled with a lack of expertise. In addition, student learning outcomes assessment was often perceived as contradictory to contemplative education, and the institution struggled to integrate assessment within its set of cultural values. However, in the past four years Naropa has intentionally addressed many of these challenges and has aggressively taken the opportunity to implement and sustain student learning outcomes assessment practices that integrate contemplative practices and pedagogies with traditional academic theories and techniques.

During Naropa’s last accreditation process in 2000, the Evaluation Team “stipulated that a report on assessment be sent to North Central [Association] by November 2001” and that a focused visit by the NCA would occur in 2003–2004 “to determine that Naropa University has implemented an assessment plan and practices.” The Introduction to the current self-study details institutional changes and improvements in response to the list of concerns expressed by the site team. This chapter further develops our history with regard to student learning outcomes assessment since the 2000 accreditation report.

In 2001, the University submitted an assessment report that was accepted and in the words of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) demonstrated the institution’s “progress in addressing challenges identified by the 2000 Evaluation Team.”

As a result of the 2004 focused visit, Naropa’s affiliation with the NCA continued, with stipulations on two off-site programs and a requirement of NCA approval prior to the offering of any new degree programs. In addition, the University was required to submit a progress report involving “an assessment document[ing] curriculum change and program improvement emerging from assessment of student learning from all degree programs” by April 30, 2007. The University was also advised to expand its assessment process to include “all members of the institution” and to increase its “understanding and commitment to assessment,” foster a “greater degree of coordination or cooperation among and between degree programs,” further communicate its goals and objectives in curricular materials, and employ “a careful, reflective process when changes in assessment strategies are proposed.”

Unfortunately, during the period immediately following the 2004 focused visit, Naropa experienced a change in leadership within the Office of Academic Affairs, the department that steers the learning outcomes assessment initiative. New and permanent leadership did not begin until July 2006, hampering extensive progress on assessment in the intervening two years. Nonetheless, some institutional progress was made, and in response to the 2007 report, the HLC did find areas of advancement, including the requirement of annual learning outcomes assessment reports by each department, the establishment of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (subsequently split into the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees), the hiring of an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs to lead assessment, the new Department Systematic Review process, and some initial trainings for departments on developing outcomes assessment plans.

During the 2006–2007 academic year, Academic Affairs began to assemble a team to build a culture of planning and assessment at the institution. As of this writing, the Office of Academic Affairs includes the following personnel: Vice President for Academic Affairs, who also serves as the Dean of the Faculty; Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, who also reports to the President as Senior Diversity Officer; Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction; Assistant Dean of Business and Academic Support; Assistant Dean of Program Development and Strategic Initiatives; Director of Distance Learning; and an executive assistant and administrative coordinator. The establishment of such a strong office, which dedicates considerable effort to the coordination and guidance around learning and teaching, and/or clinical work, reducing their ability to conduct research and engage in institutional self-assessment activities. (We also recognize that much of this outside work also contributes to teaching and professional development.) Finally, a comprehensive view of the undergraduate curriculum has only recently been articulated, thus impeding progress on assessment of the Core Curriculum.

The development of the Academic Plan and the constitution of the Undergraduate Oversight Committee can be seen as positive steps to rectify this situation during the next one to three years.
evaluation at the institution, has resulted in consistent and meaningful progress. The efforts of this office are complemented by those of the two faculty-led curriculum committees, which are charged with adhering to a curriculum approval process that includes assurance of student learning outcomes assessment within each newly proposed course or curriculum, and the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, who leads the Undergraduate Oversight Committee in planning for a new undergraduate curriculum and assessment protocol consistent with the Academic Plan.

CORE COMPONENT 3A – The institution’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

Naropa has made substantive progress in developing a university-wide system of academic planning and assessment. The chapter on Criterion 2 notes that, in 2006, the University inaugurated the Department Systematic Review (DSR), an annual evaluation and planning process that examines both learning outcomes assessment and performance data in an effort to take stock of department sustainability and to plan for the future. Designed as a collaboration between Academic Affairs and academic departments, the DSR is aimed at building a culture of planning and assessment based on departments’ articulation of learning goals and measurable outcomes, continuous alignment with the University’s mission, and reflection on such performance data as revenue contribution, enrollment and retention, and student satisfaction. The DSR is itself subject to review and meta-analysis (see Criterion 4).

Within the framework of the DSR, Academic Affairs has worked with departments on the implementation of a three-year cycle of learning outcomes assessment involving planning, data collection and analysis, curriculum review, and (as needed) curriculum modification. The discussion below notes that all academic departments are fully engaged with this program and that many (though, admittedly, not all) have at least one year of both quantitative and qualitative data. For each DSR meeting, data on student learning outcomes assessment are brought together with other institutional data sets to undertake collaborative analysis and planning for each academic unit. Also discussed below are ways in which the DSR and outcomes assessment are being used to make programmatic decisions.

In 2009, the University developed and approved a five-year Academic Plan. Since its adoption by Academic Council (the full faculty body) and Cauldron (the faculty’s executive committee) in May 2009, this plan has been guiding various efforts to align and integrate learning goals across the institution, revise student learning outcomes assessment plans, and inform major curricular decisions.

Student Learning and Effective Teaching

Naropa University Educational Vision and Learning Outcomes

Since its founding in 1974, Naropa has had a clear and well-articulated view of the importance of contemplative practice in students’ lives and the potential benefits of integrating contemplative practice and traditional academic fields of study and modes of learning. The Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in September 2008 charged the University with delivering on this distinctive curricular view “with excellence,” and, in order to do so, with creating an Academic Plan that would clarify the nature and purpose of contemplative education and would lay a course for continuous institutional improvement. During the 2008–2009 academic year, the University developed and approved a five-year Academic Plan, which establishes a curricular vision, a pedagogy, and university-wide learning outcomes. Data from student surveys collected during the strategic planning process, insights from “best practices” in contemporary curriculum development, and published articulations and interpretations of the University’s founding vision all heavily influenced the contents of this document (RR, AA–1).

Since its adoption by Academic Council and Cauldron in May 2009, the plan has guided various efforts to align and integrate learning goals across the institution, revise student learning outcomes assessment plans, and inform major curricular decisions. Two key elements of “Academic Plan—Part I” include an educational vision statement and a correlate of six learning outcomes, which taken together outline what students may expect to experience at the University and to gain through successful completion of their programs.3

The plan will guide the University in reviewing its curricula and in making appropriate changes. It directly relates to the strategic planning goal to “strengthen the educational experience for students” and “provide students with knowledge skills, and contemplative training to enhance their effectiveness in the broader

3 The Academic Plan will eventually consist of three parts. Part I, adopted in May 2009, sets out the faculty’s view of the curriculum and the steps needed to realize this view at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Part II, primarily the result of a collaboration between Academic Affairs and the Enrollment Management Team, provides a road map that targets specific degree programs and resource investments for enrollment growth. Part III, which has not as yet been completed, will collate department requests for teaching and learning spaces, technology, and related physical infrastructure and will provide the data for the campus master planning exercise.
world.” Moreover, it will help to “define the University’s distinctiveness and what it delivers”; “broaden the curriculum by adding courses in areas not currently represented”; “provide enhanced levels of student support through counseling, mentoring, and better preparation for careers upon graduation”; and “strengthen and integrate diversity” (RR, AA-1, pp. 1–2).

The following statement from the Academic Plan is known as the Educational Vision Statement. It is derived from the University’s Mission Statement and sets out in broad terms the purpose and focus of a Naropa education:

Learning at Naropa is an invitation to those who hold curiosity, are passionate scholars, and seek personal transformation and engagement with the world. Our educational heritage includes a range of mindfulness practices that cultivate presence, clarity and integrity. These practices spark the student’s courageous inquiry into self, society, and nature. Our learning community values a love of study, artistic training, concern for ecological wisdom, and a commitment to diversity. Because our intent is to prepare students to encounter our changing world as skillful and confident participants, we situate learning in contexts that are cultural, historical, and environmental. Naropa graduates translate their learning into gifts dedicated to a just and living world.

Our educational path focuses on immersion in contemplative theory and practice; exploration of diversity and ecological sustainability; strengthening skills in critical thinking, research, and writing, as well as other modes of inquiry, knowing and expression, such as those that derive from the arts; the building of intra- and interpersonal capacities; developing competency in a major area of study; and the application of learning to real-world settings. (RR, AA-1, pp. 18–19)

This broad statement yields the following, more specific learning outcomes:

1. **Competency in Contemplative Theory and Practice**: Graduates are able to engage the world through unbiased awareness and presence of self, insight and clarity of mind, and compassionate practice.

2. **Skillfulness in Addressing Diversity and Ecological Sustainability**: Graduates are able to think critically and analytically about social and cultural diversity; they recognize the interconnectedness of the human community to ecological sustainability and cultivate sustainable practices.

3. **Ability to Employ Multiple Modes of Inquiry, Knowing, and Expression**: Graduates are able to think, read, and write analytically and critically; use academic research methodologies; and use library resources and technical media. Graduates understand and are able to employ the contribution of the arts to human inquiry, knowing, and expression.

4. **Embody Intra-and Interpersonal Capacities**: Graduates are able to effectively communicate as individuals and in collaboration with others through empathetic listening and inquiry, embodied deep listening and dialogue, and intercultural competency in diverse groups.

5. **Demonstrate Knowledge and Skill in a Discipline or Area of Study**: Graduates develop a comprehensive understanding of both foundational and advanced concepts and methods in their area of study; build awareness of contemporary issues; and demonstrate the ability to apply, synthesize, or create knowledge through a capstone project or paper.

6. **Apply Learning in Real-World Settings**: Graduates are able and inclined to engage real-world challenges and to work ethically and effectively across diverse communities, drawing on disciplinary competencies, civic knowledge, presence and personal values, and creative intelligence. (RR, AA-1, pp. 19–20)

Several observations about the Educational Vision Statement and derived learning outcomes are in order. First, the Academic Plan is intended to articulate a view of the curriculum, including pedagogy and outcomes, for both undergraduate and graduate education at Naropa. Data gathered for the Strategic Plan indicate a lack of institutional clarity around contemplative education that impedes our ability to communicate the benefits of such an education and shape student expectations. The Vision Statement and set of outcomes are designed to provide an internal benchmark against which all degree programs can be assessed.

Second, the Academic Plan recognizes that implementation of the vision and outcomes will unfold differently at the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the undergraduate level, alignment with the six learning outcomes, and such ancillary concepts as the curricular arc (the way in which the curriculum will deliver on the six outcomes developmentally over a four-year period) and journey guides (advisers who assist students in integrating contemplative and academic work), requires significant revision of the existing Core (general education) Curriculum and its bridge into department majors. This work was begun in September 2009 by the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and the Undergraduate Oversight Committee (RR, AA-45–46).

At the graduate level, the alignment work is being supervised by the graduate chairs sitting on the Chairs Council and will be initiated during the Spring 2010 semester. Because graduate programs are already monitored for their align-
Assessment of Student Learning

During the 2006–2007 academic year, Academic Affairs undertook a reevaluation of departments’ student learning outcomes assessment efforts, conducting meetings with each academic department and establishing a more robust training program and a three-year assessment cycle. These early meetings revealed that, in general, departments struggled with integrating learning outcomes assessment into their existing administrative and curricular workloads and required support and skill-building. Many departments were considered to have adopted an approach of “minimal compliance” in implementing student learning outcomes assessment. Academic Affairs undertook several steps to improve the quality and depth of assessment work and to build faculty capacity and commitment. In particular, assessment was tied more closely to the annual DSR and was subject to a schedule for the delivery of planning and reporting documents. A template for the submission of multiyear comprehensive assessment plans was adopted, and the newly hired Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction began offering a series of workshops to faculty and staff, as well as individual coaching and training sessions.

During the 2007–2008 academic year, an intensive period of faculty development occurred, with Academic Affairs staff offering 8 trainings attended by 59 faculty and staff members as well as more than 75 hours of specialized coaching with departments. During the past two years, faculty teams have participated in trainings offered by the HLC and have attended the HLC annual meeting. Perhaps most important in this early stage was the message that Academic Affairs communicated: departments were encouraged to improve their student learning outcomes assessments by providing authentic correspondence with the curriculum, addressing pedagogical issues of concern to the faculty, and sticking with the plans that were developed for three complete years. Departments could not opt out of learning outcomes assessment work.

Data from the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 academic years clearly demonstrate progress in normalizing learning outcomes assessment across academic departments. Academic Affairs monitors this progress through a meta-analysis and summative report. Evaluation of departmental assessment activity is based on the following criteria: (1) the quality of the overall plan; (2) the adequacy of articulated goals and learning outcomes; (3) the alignment of curricular goals and the University mission; (4) the presence of realistic plans for implementation and a feedback loop; and (5) timeliness of submission. Department plans are judged on the basis of a four-point continuum (target achieved, adequate, emergent, and preemergent), with a narrative rubric for each specific area (RR, AA–7–8).

Table 3.1 provides an abbreviated version of the meta-analysis of the overall assessment for all twenty assessment units. The second line of the table defines the four degrees by which the criterion may be met, and the third line represents 4

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4 “Assessment units” represent the institutional level toward which department faculty members orient their curriculum planning and assessment activities. In some cases, a department is the assessment unit (e.g., Religious Studies has four distinct programs but treats itself as a single assessment unit), whereas in other cases, a single department has more than one assessment unit (e.g., Environmental Studies separately plans for its BA and MA programs). Transitioning to treating each degree program as a distinct assessment unit would build comparability in evaluating the University’s progress and would ensure greater clarity and differentiation of undergraduate and graduate learning outcomes. Still, some careful attention and collaborative thinking would need to happen to identify how best to support the chairs who lead departments with multiple assessment units. For example, it is probably not realistic to assume that the chair of Religious Studies, with its four potential assessment units, would be able to lead four parallel annual assessment processes as resources are presently allocated.
Criterion Three

Academic Affairs’ view of the number and percentage of departments meeting each quality level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Achieved</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Emergent</th>
<th>Preemergent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department assessment plan is clearly expressed in the template, achievable, and begins substantive assessment activities in the 2007–2008 academic year.</td>
<td>Department assessment plan may need minor adjustments, is achievable with minor adjustments, and begins substantive assessment in 2007–2008 or has an acceptable reason not to.</td>
<td>Department is seriously deficient in one of the following ways: form, learning goals &amp; outcomes, implementation design, or achievability.</td>
<td>Department is seriously deficient in two or more of the following ways: form, learning goals &amp; outcomes, implementation design, or achievability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007–08 Results</th>
<th>35% (7 of 20)</th>
<th>15% (3 of 20)</th>
<th>15% (3 of 20)</th>
<th>35% (7 of 20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008–09 Results</td>
<td>35% (7 of 20)</td>
<td>50% (10 of 20)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15% (3 of 20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: With the two low categories, issues ranged from departments having no plan in place, lacking clarity between goals and outcomes, having no plan for implementation, and/or having plans in need of substantial revision. For the second year, issues ranged from departments having no plan in place or not making progress on developing the plan since the previous year’s draft.

From the 2007–2008 to the 2008–2009 academic year, there was a 35 percent increase in the number of assessment units that attained either a “target achieved” or “adequate” rating. As of the end of the 2008–2009 academic year, there were only three programs without a workable assessment plan.

Mixed progress can be seen when assessment plans are evaluated on other criteria. With regard to the existence of goals and learning outcomes, the number of departments attaining either a “target achieved” or “adequate” rating increased during the two years by 35 percent (to a total of 85 percent of departments). In contrast, the goals and University mission assessment criterion saw an increase of only 5 percent (to a total of 65 percent) for the top two ratings. The main explanation for this may be that Naropa did not have a clear set of institution-wide educational goals prior to the creation of the Academic Plan and that departments found alignment with the broader and more abstract Mission Statement to be challenging. Starting with the 2009–2010 academic year DSR meetings, departments will receive directives and guidance with realigning curriculum and revising assessment measures in light of the outcomes specified in the Academic Plan.

The rating levels of the implementation and feedback loop criterion had relatively little change during the two years, with shifts of just 5 percent each for the “target achieved” and “adequate” categories. These percentages can best be seen as a reflection of the developmental stage most departments have reached in outcomes assessment: for the 2008–2009 DSR meetings, a comparatively small number of department personnel responsible for assessment had completed a full round of assessment and written a substantive assessment report. Significant faculty development in this area occurred in fall 2009 through trainings on using outcomes assessment data and writing assessment reports and through focused meetings with each academic department.

There was a 25 percent increase in timeliness, as most of the programs with acceptable plans were implementing these as of the end of spring 2009.

The 2009–2010 academic year stands as the culmination of the initial three-year cycle for our new learning outcomes assessment planning and implementation. Preliminary meetings were held between the Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction and the academic departments in fall 2009 because the full Department Systematic Reviews were pushed to spring 2010 to accommodate concluding work on the self-study. This time frame notwithstanding, we feel confident in reporting that a culture of assessment has been taking root among faculty since this initiative began in 2007. Naropa University faculty members have been encouraged to build learning outcomes assessments that allow them to address critical questions about the effectiveness of their pedagogies, their classes and course sequencing, and the like. Most heartening is that departments are beginning to use their assessment findings for curricular improvements. Below are a few examples of how Naropa departments have assessed or plan to assess student learning as well as some of their findings.

- The faculty of the Department of Somatic Counseling Psychology assesses student learning and effective teaching using a variety of instruments and targeted assessments. The department conducts several student evaluations (structured around student self-review and faculty evaluations) focused on the internships, with an emphasis on particular learning outcomes. In addition, the master’s the-
sis, comprehensive exam, and several course-specific exams are examined for students’ attainment of delineated outcomes. At the end of the 2008–2009 academic year, the department implemented or proposed measures to enhance student learning in relation to several of the department’s learning outcomes. As a result of the assessment findings, the department added a requirement for students to complete personal therapy, reallocated Core Faculty teaching loads to ensure coverage of certain courses, restructured several syllabi, took measures to enhance students’ internship preparation, and began offering American Psychological Association writing style workshops. In addition, the assessment process has informed the department’s budgetary requests (including a part-time research coordinator and the creation of a new course).

- The Department of Environmental Studies has also adopted multiple strategies to assess student learning, appropriately differentiating the assessment plans for the undergraduate Environmental Studies major and the graduate Environmental Leadership program. In the master’s program, student learning outcomes are assessed using embedded test questions and outcome-specific oral examinations or assignments. In addition, a faculty evaluation of the applied leadership projects is used to assess the outcomes listed under the MA program’s final goal. The BA program also relies on embedded testing and assignments in designated upper-division courses. Based on the 2008–2009 assessment, the faculty worked to eliminate overlap between courses in the graduate program and revised the contents of the ENV 635, Political Ecology for Global Environmental Leadership, class. Similarly, the undergraduate level assessment provided an opportunity for the faculty to reevaluate the contents of several courses and plan for how the learning associated with several outcomes is distributed across the whole curriculum.

- The undergraduate Department of Contemplative Psychology is undertaking a series of targeted assessments of student learning outcomes to better understand student learning in the program and to support hypotheses for a revision of the curriculum. In 2008–2009, the department sought to assess outcomes related to students’ development of compassion and self-acceptance. The faculty used the Jimenez Compassion Scale, an independently developed psychological evaluation instrument, to assess students’ compassion for others at varying points in the sequence of required courses for the program. In addition, a self-acceptance scale based on the Jimenez Scale was developed and administered by the department faculty. Strikingly, the findings indicated a significant rise in compassion and self-acceptance through the first three semesters of coursework, with a significant decline in the fourth semester and beyond when coursework increasingly brought students into service roles in the community through a required service-learning experience. Students appear to be less compassionate when working in the community than in classroom-based courses. The department intends to administer these tests again in an attempt to gain further insight into this dynamic, and in the meantime has begun reevaluating the contents of the fourth-semester course. Next, the department intends to assess student outcomes related to intellectual development and knowledge of psychological theories through an examination of the BA Senior Project class as well as summative papers from a number of upper-division courses.

In brief, Naropa is making significant progress in assessing student-learning outcomes. Only a handful of departments have not completed a viable plan, and the majority of departments are well on their way to collecting, analyzing, and employing data.

In summary, the planning process that resulted in the University’s adoption of the Academic Plan can be thought of as a helix, beginning with a revision of the Mission Statement and, while circling around this self-study document, building ever-greater specificity with regard to our educational vision and learning outcomes. The DSR process that was initiated in Fall 2006 has traditionally asked departments to describe their programs’ curricular alignment with the Mission Statement, and the newly adopted Academic Plan provides a more robust framework of learning outcomes to guide future alignment and assessment activities.

A number of general comments can summarize Naropa’s progress and point to future directions with regard to learning outcomes assessment. First, the meta-view established by Academic Affairs’ ratings of departmental progress indicates that an assessment culture is clearly emerging at Naropa. Most departments have written clear plans and have moved toward implementation, and only a handful continue to struggle with planning and/or execution. Still, most departments have not completed the full three-year assessment cycle that began in 2007. We look forward to having a full cycle of documents in order to discern patterns and document the desired institutional culture change.

At the time of this writing, a full round of DSRs had not been completed for the 2009–2010 academic year. The presidential transition, implementation of the 10 percent efficiency analysis, and campus-wide attention to this self-study—all of which occupied the University during fall 2009—led the Office of Academic Affairs to move the full DSR meeting schedule from fall to spring. Preliminary meetings in fall 2009 focused on the assessment reports submitted by departments but did not attend to all of the metrics typical of the DSR process (RR, DSR-5). Four-
A positive sign is that the Undergraduate Oversight Center (which is subject to the DSR process), to date none of the integrating threads of undergraduate education have been subject to sustained assessment. In order to further ensure developing faculty commitment and competence, departments have been asked to extend their current comprehensive plans for another three years, with appropriate revisions as deemed necessary.

A second observation relates to the current leadership of learning outcomes assessment at Naropa, more specifically, the desirability of assessment being driven by the faculty itself rather than the primary responsibility resting with Academic Affairs. One positive sign of such movement is the burgeoning emphasis that the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees place on assessment planning when reviewing new course and full curriculum proposals. The new curriculum approval process adopted by the faculty in 2007 makes explicit the linkage between outcomes assessment and curriculum planning. At the same time, no faculty body exists on campus to take a broad view of assessment; we lack a pool of faculty trainers to support department efforts, joint management with Academic Affairs of assessment meetings, and collaboration on the annual evaluation of assessment progress. These are likely to be a natural evolution of the faculty’s overall capacity, comfort, and familiarity with assessment in the coming years, and learning outcomes assessment will benefit from increases to the Core Faculty to share in this workload. In order to further ensure developing faculty commitment and competence, departments have been asked to extend their current comprehensive plans for another three years, with appropriate revisions as deemed necessary.

Third, the absence of a unified learning outcomes assessment plan for undergraduate education should be acknowledged. Previous HLC teams have criticized the University for its lack of attention to assessment of general education. With the exception of the Naropa Core Writing Seminars (whose coordinator submits an annual assessment of the sequence of courses) and the Undergraduate Advising Center (which is subject to the DSR process), to date none of the integrating threads of undergraduate education have been subject to sustained assessment. The absence of a comprehensive view of undergraduate education is largely the explanation for this lack. A positive sign is that the Undergraduate Oversight Committee is now committed to designing a curriculum and implementing assessment in line with the newly adopted Academic Plan. It is anticipated that, in the next several years, both the Core Curriculum and its connections to department majors will be refined in light of the Academic Plan, and that a robust learning outcomes assessment protocol for undergraduate education will be created in tandem with these curricular revisions.

CORE COMPONENT 3B – The institution values and supports effective teaching.

Naropa University has made progress in increasing the number of faculty members with terminal degrees and actively hiring individuals from diverse backgrounds. The Faculty Handbook and hiring practices call for demonstration of effective teaching in initial appointments and promotion review (RR, HR-3). Whereas some departments ask prospective job candidates to conduct a research seminar, all expect a sample teaching session.

In support of our emphasis on teaching excellence, student evaluations are collected at the end of the semester for each course. However, the use of these evaluations for monitoring instructional performance and supporting faculty development is mixed. No cumulative data analyses are conducted for the set of evaluations collected for each class section or instructor. The raw data, i.e., the original evaluation sheets or copies, are shared with department chairs and inquiring faculty. A few department chairs prepare a summary report, which is shared with faculty in the department and Academic Affairs, though this is not a widely held practice. No trends based on type of course (e.g., required versus elective), level or field are currently calculated.

In contrast, the evaluations play a key role in the faculty review and promotion process (RR, HB-3). The team of peer evaluators, the Faculty Affairs Committee, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs are all expected to study the evaluations going back at least three to five years depending on the personnel action being considered. Emphasis on teaching is further reflected by the dossier that applicants submit. Ranked Faculty eligible to apply for status change (from Core Candidate to Core) or promotion (from Assistant to Associate or Associate to Full Professor) must submit a dossier that includes self-evaluation on their teaching. (Contemplative practice, service, and professional development and accomplishments are the remaining criteria used for personnel actions that faculty applicants are expected to include in their applications.)
The University supports teaching excellence through a variety of in-house trainings. For example, both Academic Affairs and the Senior Diversity Officer provide workshops on diversity, syllabus preparation, assessment of student learning outcomes, and other topics related to teaching, and ad hoc faculty groups periodically offer workshops on such topics as contemplative pedagogy. The monthly Academic Council meetings, which involve all Ranked Faculty members, typically dedicate a portion of their agendas to discussions and demonstrations about teaching and learning. Outside trainers have occasionally been invited to campus, and these demonstrations have typically included both Ranked and Adjunct Faculty.

In general, although excellence in teaching is expected of Naropa faculty, several institutional factors may work against support and development of this area. First, faculty members report that low salaries interfere with their professional development (and arguably, their teaching). (The chapter on Criterion 2 provides further analysis of faculty and staff compensation, along with discussion of the intentions behind the Strategic Plan to address this issue).

Second, although Ranked Faculty members are eligible to apply for internal grant funds to support teaching and other professional development, the pool of monies has varied during the past several years and on average has always been fairly modest. In 2009–2010, the University reaped the first benefits of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, resulting in a budget in excess of $140,000. These funds occupy a distinct line item in the Academic Affairs budget, thus carrying over from year to year, and have been allocated to the support of faculty development and implementation of the Academic Plan. Faculty teams have been sponsored for participation at meetings of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Council of Undergraduate Research, and the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience.

### Faculty at Naropa University

Naropa takes pride in the quality and dedication of our faculty, a unique collection of scholars and practitioners of contemplative education across a range of academic and artistic disciplines. Table 3.2 indicates that, since the previous accreditation self-study, the number and percentage of instructional faculty with terminal degrees (or equivalent) has increased.

#### Table 3.2. Number of Faculty by Degree Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ranked Faculty</td>
<td>Adjunct Faculty**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than terminal degree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-traditional advanced degree</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>74.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Adjunct Faculty data not available for 2000–2001.
** Ranked and Adjunct Faculty data based on person count, not FTE.

As the Introduction to this self-study notes, the change has been dramatic within the last several years of hiring. For example, of the 30 Core Faculty currently employed by the University and hired since 2000, 20 (66 percent) hold the appropriate advanced degree.

Some quarters of the campus believe that master’s trained professionals (especially in our heavily enrolled areas of psychology) are adequate to the teaching needs of selected graduate programs and that greater emphasis should be placed on terminal degrees in the liberal arts and sciences. Because most of the graduate psychology programs are counseling training programs, recruitment priorities are often on high levels of professional experience and expertise rather than academic training per se. This is especially the case for the hiring of Adjunct Faculty. Recruitment of Ranked Faculty in the graduate counseling psychology programs does emphasize hiring faculty with doctoral degrees as well as relevant experience and training expertise. This is an ongoing campus conversation, and as resources become available for significant Ranked Faculty hiring, planning will need to occur more systematically.

The institution has also worked to increase the diversity of the faculty (Table 3.3). Both the ethnic/racial and gender composition of the Ranked Faculty has shifted substantially since the 2000–2001 academic year. In 2000–2001, the self-reported ethnic/racial diversity of Ranked Faculty was only 2 percent of the total. It is at 10 percent in the current academic year. The gender breakdown of Ranked Faculty has gone from 57.5 percent male and 42.5 percent female in 2000–2001 to 38 percent and 62 percent, respectively. Although the University has made improvements in hiring a diverse faculty with strong educational credentials and in ensuring stronger presence of Ranked Faculty in the classroom, we continue to work on these percentages.
As previously mentioned, an area of critique in the previous accreditation process was Naropa’s high numbers of Adjunct Faculty, particularly in the undergraduate programs. We have made considerable progress in this area. First, ten years ago, the University employed 40 Ranked Faculty, and today we employ 71 Ranked Faculty. Second, in 2000–2001, Adjunct Faculty taught 67 percent of all instructional credits, and Ranked Faculty taught only 33 percent. These numbers contrast with 44 percent and 56 percent, respectively, for the last full academic year (2008–2009), marking a shift in the past years toward Ranked Faculty teaching the majority of courses.

The breakdown for graduate and undergraduate teaching is worth specifying as well. In 2000–2001, Adjunct and Ranked Faculty generated 75 percent and 25 percent, respectively, of graduate teaching credits. This shifted to 48 percent by Adjunct Faculty and 52 percent by Ranked Faculty in 2008–2009. Similar patterns are noticeable for undergraduate education. In 2000–2001, Adjunct and Ranked Faculty generated 72 percent and 28 percent, respectively, of teaching credits at the undergraduate level. This shifted to 50 percent and 50 percent in 2008–2009. An even more positive change occurred for the Core Curriculum (general education), for which 69 percent of classes were taught by Adjunct Faculty and 31 percent by Ranked Faculty ten years ago, and 39 percent and 61 percent, respectively, in 2008–2009 (RR, AA-17).

### Recruitment and Hiring

Naropa University is committed to maintaining an outstanding faculty and to creating a professionally challenging and supportive atmosphere for all faculty. In the past several years, the University has followed a selective process in making initial appointments, with nationally advertised recruitment for Core Candidate positions and regional recruitment for Instructors. Given changes in leadership of the Office of Academic Affairs, it is not possible to reconstruct hiring practices prior to 2006. The key accomplishment in recent years is the recognition that individuals holding Adjunct Faculty appointments are not automatically favored when salaried (Core Candidate, Instructor) positions become available; instead, they are included in the regional or national pool of applicants for consideration. In 2008, Academic Affairs and Human Resources codified hiring practices to ensure adherence to federal guidelines and the aspiration to conduct competitive searches (RR, HR-14).

The University follows equal opportunity policies, as well as the processes laid out in the Employee Handbook and Hiring Process for Faculty and Academic Staff sheet (RR, HR-14). Academic Affairs strives to use the DSR process for initial discussions about faculty hiring, though the timing of resignations and retirements often means that authorization to recruit is “off cycle.” All proposals for new positions and the filling of vacant positions must be approved by the President, in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Business and Finance.

Although Human Resources is responsible for advertising vacancies and receiving applications, the bulk of recruitment work takes place in the academic department housing the position. Once a position is approved, a search committee is established, generally consisting of the department chair, one or two additional faculty members from within the department, and one faculty member from another department. Some departments encourage a student and the administrative director (support staff to the chair) to sit on the search committee. In recognition of the importance placed on teaching at Naropa, department search activities typically include a guest lecture or other sample teaching when finalists visit campus for an interview.
Faculty hiring is a manifestation of shared governance at the University. Following employee and faculty policies, the search committee reviews applications and creates a smaller pool for further screening. Telephone interviews do not require prior approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, though invitations for campus interviews do. The latter allows Academic Affairs to assess the diversity and overall quality of the candidate pool. After the campus visit, a recommendation by the search committee and department chair is sent to the Vice President, who in turn shares the department and his/her own recommendation with the President. The President must approve all Ranked Faculty hiring decisions and authorize the Vice President to negotiate salary and other employment conditions with the top-ranked candidate.

The selection of Adjunct Faculty, who teach on a course-to-course and semester-to-semester basis, is accomplished through a less extensive search process. Working with Human Resource to post course availabilities that cannot be filled with the existing roster of individuals, the department chair and administrative director generally screen applicants, drawing upon the subject matter expertise of Ranked Faculty as need be. Academic Affairs is not generally involved in the review of Adjunct Faculty for initial appointment but does confer with the department chair when course evaluations raise questions about the continued employability of a particular faculty member.

**Faculty Ranks and Review**

Like many institutions founded in the 1970s that were experimental in nature, Naropa offers multiyear contracts to faculty, provides for a probationary period before individuals are eligible for a more regular status, and does not subscribe to a tenure-track system. The Ranked Faculty fall into the following categories (see Table 3.4): Core Faculty, who are initially hired as Core Candidates; and Non–Core Faculty. Both Core and Non–Core Faculty are compensated on an annual salary (rather than per-course) basis, though only the former are eligible for multiyear contracts and opportunities to apply for sabbaticals and promotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.4. Naropa University Ranked Faculty Designations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non–Core Faculty Track</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
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*All initial appointments are as Core Candidate with the appropriate rank (Assistant, Associate, Full Professor).*

Core Candidates are hired with rank (Assistant, Associate, or Professor) and are on a probationary track prior to review for Core Faculty status in the second year of employment. Full-time Core Faculty are assigned 18 credits of teaching duties during the academic year, though some faculty members receive reductions or equivalences for serving as department chair, Cauldron chair, and the like. Faculty responsibilities and duties are specified in the Faculty Handbook, with levels of mastery tied to the ranks. Whereas Core and Core Candidate Faculty are expected to provide service at the University level, Insitutors are primarily assigned to serve within their departments. Similarly, the former are expected to participate in Academic Council, whereas the latter are invited but not expected to attend these governance meetings.

The University expects Adjunct Faculty to make equally strong contributions to instruction as the Ranked Faculty do but not to engage in service. They are issued semester contracts and compensated on a per-course basis. In addition, because our governance processes include slots for adjunct representation, Academic Affairs contracts with and pays a stipend to Adjunct Faculty who serve on committees (see below).

As noted, course evaluations are periodically reviewed to ensure instructional quality. Adjunct Faculty who are hired on a regular basis are able to accrue service credit toward a change in designation and compensation. In specific, Adjunct Faculty are classified on the basis of the number of credit hours they have taught over the years at the University: Adjunct (below 18 credits previously taught), Associate Adjunct (18–35 credits), Senior Adjunct (35–71 credits), and Adjunct Professor (72 credits and above).

Faculty governance includes engagement in an extensive review process in order to ensure the quality of faculty members’ teaching, professional development, contemplative practice, research and creative work, and service. The criteria that are used for status change (from Core Candidate to Core) and promotion (from Assistant to Associate or Associate to Full Professor) focus on teaching experience, quality of teaching, research and creative work, contemplative development, and service to the University and the broader community. The period of Core Candidacy gives both the faculty member and the University the time to assess the alignment or “goodness of fit” between the two, especially in regard to the University’s contemplative education mission. The latest Faculty Handbook, which at the time of this writing is in draft form as it works its way through the governance approval process, is undergoing a subtle but important shift. The faculty review process previously made use of a Mentoring Council, which reviewed
a promotion candidates’ dossier and provided supportive feedback on teaching, and is now using what is called the Peer Evaluation Council, better reflecting the evaluative role of this group of professional colleagues.

A distinctive feature of Naropa’s governance is the role played by Adjunct Faculty. First, the Adjunct Partners is a body that consists of one representative from each degree-granting department at the University and that meets regularly with the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs to discuss workplace conditions. It was through these deliberations that Academic Affairs agreed in 2008 to structure adjunct contracts to include compensation when classes are canceled at the last minute. This ensures that the best Adjunct Faculty will agree to take on a teaching assignment and begin syllabus development months before a class is scheduled to begin. Second, each Adjunct Partner is expected to meet with his/her department chair at least once a year and to serve as liaison between adjuncts and the department on confidential matters. Third, Adjunct Faculty are included both on Cauldron and the University Budget Committee as full voting members and participated throughout the two-year strategic planning process. These latter measures represent attempts to bring Adjunct Faculty firmly into conversation with University leadership on pressing matters affecting the institution as a whole, especially teaching. For example, recent conversations have focused on the role that Adjunct Faculty can play in student retention.

Consistent with the contemplative dimensions of Naropa’s academic work, the evaluation of a faculty member’s teaching is holistic, making use of external data (such as course evaluations), more proximately generated data (such as peer observations of classroom performance), and personal data (an essay from the promotion candidate reflecting on his/her teaching successes and challenges and the way contemplative pedagogy is manifested in his/her teaching). Recently, the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) has acknowledged the uneven quality of these essays and has begun to lay out a set of specific questions to guide the writing of the reflective essay and the role of the essay in assessing faculty members’ teaching contributions. The Office of Academic Affairs, working with FAC, intends to design a development program for new faculty and faculty preparing for a personnel decision, to ensure compliance with the new contents of a promotion dossier.

Professional Development

As noted above, contributions to one’s artistic or scholarly field are a requirement for promotion, and the University seeks to encourage and support this work through its faculty development program. Albeit modest, professional development funding is provided each year through the Office of Academic Affairs to support faculty attendance at conferences and workshops, presentations and publications, as well as other research costs. The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) reviews submitted applications and makes recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who makes a final determination on the awards. Prior to the close of the academic year, awarded faculty are expected to submit a final report documenting their professional development activities; the absence of such a report may hinder a faculty member’s receipt of funding support in future years.

The recent infusion of funds resulting from the 10 percent efficiency exercise has meant that Academic Affairs can support individual faculty proposals and shape development opportunities in line with the implementation of the Academic Plan. Support for faculty participation in conferences and workshops related to the Academic Plan includes a requirement that faculty return to campus and provide some training to their department or appropriate faculty committee (e.g., the Undergraduate Oversight Committee). The aim is to support individual faculty members, empower them to act as “trainers” for their colleagues, and build institutional knowledge about broad developments in higher education. This has also included close attention to the quality of our online courses. In fall 2009, the majority of online faculty completed the Pearson eCollege EDU 106 course, “Reviewing and Enriching Your Online Course,” and funding is available for additional online faculty to complete this workshop in the next year or so.

An additional and positive form of professional development is Naropa’s supportive sabbatical policy. Core Faculty are eligible for a semester paid sabbatical after 6 years of service and a full-year paid sabbatical after 13 years of service. After the full year sabbatical, Core Faculty are eligible for semester sabbaticals after every 6 years of service. Sabbaticals are specifically provided for professional development activities, and the policy is listed within the Faculty Handbook (RR, HB-3). Faculty members returning from sabbaticals are expected to make a presentation on their learning and experiences to Academic Council early in the new semester.

The importance of professional development activities is evidenced by the documentation kept by Academic Affairs, including faculty submission of updated curriculum vitae at the start of each academic year, submission of reports by recipients of faculty development funds, and the posting of faculty notes in Naropa Magazine (naropa.edu/academicalfairs/fac_notes.cfm).

In response to ongoing and pervasive curricular needs, the University provides some internal professional development trainings on a periodic basis. The
focus of Naropa-sponsored trainings frequently includes diversity, assessment, and contemplative pedagogy. In addition to these trainings and portions of Academic Council meetings, an annual faculty retreat provides time for training, sharing, community building, and reflection. In the last few years, and in consideration of the budget, the annual retreat has rotated between a weekend retreat and a one-day, in-town meeting.

Training and professional development resources for Adjunct Faculty are by and large inadequate, and both faculty and students request that adjuncts have deeper familiarity with contemplative practice and diversity issues. A significant improvement has been the beginning-of-the-semester orientation for new adjuncts, with an encouraging invitation to returning adjuncts as well, begun in fall 2008. These orientation sessions cover basic policies around grading, the syllabus guidelines, and handling difficult topics in the classroom.

Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan and then the Academic Plan, Academic Affairs and the Adjunct Partners jointly have recognized that adjuncts can play a critical role in detecting early signs of student distress and in assisting with the University's retention and student success efforts. As a result, a more robust program of workshops targeted to adjuncts will begin in spring 2010. Topics to be explored include implementing the Academic and Enrollment Management Plans, distinguishing contemplative practice and pedagogy, integrating contemplative pedagogy in the classroom, and addressing diversity and multicultural issues. The plan is for participating Adjunct Faculty to receive a stipend for attending each three-hour workshop and for these funds eventually to be rolled into compensation rates once a requirement that adjuncts attend at least one training every year is put into place.

Curriculum Committees and Syllabus Review

Two curriculum committees—one devoted to proposals relating to undergraduate courses and programs, and another related to graduate courses and programs—provide quality oversight in the delivery of Naropa's curriculum. Comprised of Ranked Faculty from various departments, the respective Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees are charged with reviewing proposals that are generated by faculty within academic departments. Proposals are judged with an eye toward the soundness of the individual courses or entire degree programs seeking approval, evidence of a learning outcomes assessment plan for new programs or the integration of a new course into an existing assessment plan, and the availability of faculty resources to deliver the proposed course or program.

Prior to the 2006–2007 focused visit related to the proposed Peace Studies undergraduate major and the termination of the Interdisciplinary Studies master's degree, the HLC reviewers expressed concern over Naropa's internal review processes for creating new program proposals and for soliciting governance and management input. In addition to the changes that were made to the Peace Studies proposal in fall 2006, a new review policy was adopted in spring 2007. The new guidelines and procedures are posted on Eropa, the University's internal web system, and delineate four types of curriculum proposals and the individuals and units that must weigh in for each type (RR, AA-39 and AA-16):

**Level 1** proposals modify existing programs or create new programs and generally have wide institutional impact; because of a stipulation on the University, these proposals require submission to the HLC for authorization. Level 1 proposals require review and recommendations by the appropriate Curriculum Committee and Cauldron before consideration and action by Academic Affairs. Along the way, these proposals must include advice and data from such administrative units as the Offices of Admissions, Marketing and Communications, and Student Administrative Services (especially Financial Aid).

**Level 2** proposals modify existing programs or other academic offerings or create new programs that do not require HLC approval. These might include a significant revision to the curriculum of an already approved degree program or the creation of a new minor area of study. Because the proposed actions involve significant changes to university-wide offerings, they require review and recommendations by the appropriate Curriculum Committee and Cauldron before consideration and action by Academic Affairs. Input from Admissions, Marketing and Communications, Financial Aid, and other administrative units is generally also called for in the development of such proposals.

**Level 3** proposals alter courses within an existing and approved degree program. For example, changing the number of credits a course receives would be considered a Level 3 proposal, as would changing the sequence of courses, adding or subtracting courses that count toward the degree, or restructuring prerequisites. These proposals require review and recommendations by the Curriculum Committee (but not Cauldron) before consideration and action by Academic Affairs and may require consultation and sign-off by various other campus administrators before Academic Affairs acts.

**Level 4** proposals involve changes to the title, numbering, description,
and so on, of an existing course. These proposals do not require either Curriculum Committee or Cauldron review and are acted upon by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and staff in consultation with the proposing department.

In addition to the formal process of curriculum review, Academic Affairs strives to ensure quality of instructional delivery through regular inspection of course syllabi. Prior to the start of each semester, individual faculty members submit course syllabi, which are reviewed by the Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction and, when necessary, may be turned back for revision. All syllabi are expected to adhere to the guidelines set by the University and available to all as a posting on Eropa (RR, AA-39–40). Specific criteria include basic details about the course, such as title and course description; the instructor’s name, degree, and office hours; meeting place and time; and required readings and any special requirements. More detailed information is expected to be included about learning goals and outcomes for the course (which are taken from the program learning goals and outcomes specified in the department’s assessment plans), grading rubric, and a weekly course outline. The University’s statement for accommodating students with qualified disabilities must also be included on syllabi.

Typical reasons for returning syllabi for modification include a course description different from the one published in the catalog, stated outcomes incommensurate with the overall assessment plan set by the department, and assignments that blatantly do not consider alternatives for students with special needs.

Naropa is committed to instructional excellence and has oriented the work of Academic Affairs to accomplish this. First, the number of Ranked Faculty has increased during the past ten years, as has the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees. This represents a strong institutional commitment to a stable and well-prepared faculty. Admittedly, the University is still heavily reliant on Adjunct Faculty, who generate approximately 44 percent of all instructional credits as of this writing. This gives rise to the need for a more robust faculty development program, which takes into account the important instructional contributions made by adjuncts, and for a course evaluation system tied to ongoing mentoring and supervision of both Ranked and Adjunct Faculty.

With regard to oversight of academic quality through review of program proposals and course syllabi, Naropa has made important strides in establishing and making use of a clearly stated policy on the levels of decision-making that different proposals entail. Academic Affairs uses a set of guidelines to ensure that syllabi adequately communicate requirements to students, recognize the needs of different students, and align with programmatic expectations for learning outcomes. One area that is not, as yet, included in syllabus review concerns the contemplative pedagogy students may encounter in any particular class. This gap is addressed in the Academic Plan, which summarizes student data on the confusion between contemplative practice and pedagogy and on their difficulty in discerning when academic and contemplative strands are being integrated in a course. It is anticipated that, as the faculty develops the Academic Plan around issues of contemplative pedagogy, the syllabus guidelines will be revised to include greater oversight of this area.

Finally, the message around the availability of support for faculty development is a mixed one, with uneven budgeting during the past ten years and significant development needs expressed by both Ranked and Adjunct Faculty. It will be important for the University to maintain the $140,000 line item resulting from the 10 percent efficiency exercise, as this is now a significant and primary source of funding for faculty development broadly and in the service of the Strategic and Academic Plans.

CORE COMPONENT 3C – The institution creates effective learning environments.

Through a variety of mechanisms—spatial, temporal, and personnel-related—Naropa endeavors to provide learning environments that foster both personal and academic development among students, as well as for employees. These mechanisms include the availability of a meditation hall on each instructional campus in Boulder, classroom seating and cushions that can be arranged in various configurations to suit each faculty member’s pedagogical style, class sections with relatively small sizes that emphasize interaction rather than one-way lecturing, a dedicated group of academic and student life advisers, and a weekly schedule available to various groups to engage in contemplative practices. In addition, aspects of the annual calendar are designed to reinforce the contemplative “container” articulated in the University’s Mission. For example, the academic year begins with both convocation and lhasang. The former is an academic ceremony...
involving speeches by key administrators and guests, artistic performances, and such creative experiences as the generation of a spontaneous poem. The latter is Tibetan for a ceremony involving purification and initiation. Consistent with our aspirations to model diversity and religious pluralism, in the last few years the lhasang conducted in early fall has included prayers, contemplative practices, and music from Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions.

At the same time, the needs expressed by faculty and students have outstripped the available physical and technological resources. Although Naropa sits on three beautiful instructional campuses in Boulder, survey and space-utilization data demonstrate the need for additional teaching and learning spaces. These include classrooms that can accommodate some mid- and large-enrollment courses; a library space suitable for individual study, group work, and the ability to house a larger collection; additional performance and studio spaces; and office and meeting spaces for all teaching (including adjunct) faculty. The Strategic Plan calls for campus master planning to set the course for realizing the space and technology requirements of the Academic Plan and other units on campus. (See Criterion 2 for more discussion about resource planning).

In the remainder of this section, we discuss ways in which Naropa attends to the environmental concomitants (broadly defined) of our mission.

Contemplative Focus

The University’s 2009 Statement of Distinctiveness includes the following mission-related statement that provides context for the term “contemplative education” as understood at Naropa:

Naropa was founded on the premise that the ultimate goal of higher education is to be a catalyst for enlightened transformation of both oneself and the world. This includes a reverence for the Earth and a commitment to sustainability. Naropa encourages students to look within, as well as without, to discover what truly matters in life. In the words of Naropa’s founder, Opening to oneself fully is opening to the world. This dedication to inner exploration and transformation makes Naropa unique among American universities. Contemplative education transforms individuals, while it prepares and motivates them to understand and transform the world (RR, MD-3).

The University strives to create an instructional culture that supports this view of education and ensures its attainment, although as the discussion of the

impetus for much of the Academic Plan indicates, our efforts have been only partially successful. The 2008 Student Administrative Services Student Survey found that 81.8 percent of undergraduate and 83.5 percent of graduate students are satisfied with the integration of the contemplative aspect in individual classes; 78.8 percent and 85 percent, respectively, are satisfied with the integration of the contemplative aspect in their major; and 80.5 percent and 83.8 percent, respectively, are satisfied with the integration of the contemplative aspect overall at Naropa (RR, SAS-17 and 31). However, in a 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), only 49 percent of responding first-year Naropa students and 40 percent of responding Naropa seniors agreed that “the mission of this institution is widely understood by the students” (RR, SAS-25 and 28). Such mixed findings point to institutional weakness in conveying to students a clear sense of the overall vision and expectations of contemplative education. Individual faculty members employ particular contemplative teaching and learning methods within their courses, though the curriculum as a whole does not reinforce a broad meta-understanding of the range and purposes of contemplative learning practices.

This weakness is described at the beginning of this chapter and underpins several of the action steps proposed by the Academic Plan. A preliminary survey conducted by the University’s Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education reveals a plethora of practices and views on contemplative pedagogy among faculty (RR, OTH-6). At the same time, faculty and staff appear to have a strong understanding of the University’s commitment to contemplative education. The 2009 Mission Survey found that 94.7 percent of employees are aware of the University’s contemplative focus, and 89.4 percent either strongly agree or agree that they understand the contemplative mission. Seventy-two percent feel that this focus guides and nurtures their work (RR, MD-9–10).

In terms of the learning environments in the classroom that support Naropa’s view of contemplative education, it appears that individual courses make use of relevant and appropriate teaching and learning methods. Our next step is to heighten institutional awareness of the repertoire of these methods, to be accomplished through new syllabus guidelines, reflective dialogues between students and “journey guides” (mentors), and advanced coursework on the philosophy and practice of contemplative education.
Also noted in the Academic Plan are data showing overall satisfaction with faculty members’ preparedness, commitment to academic excellence, teaching skills, accessibility, concern for students’ educational development, constructive feedback, and openness to hear dissenting opinions. Further, students value Naropa’s commitment to diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and points of view, which is seen as a clear outgrowth of contemplative learning. However, they also express some reservations around the faculty’s creation of learning environments and management of topics that incorporate religious and spiritual pluralism. Several departments have been asked to review their curriculum from the perspective of religious diversity, and the Office of Academic Affairs has initiated an internal grant competition for curriculum projects that integrate diversity and multicultural perspectives with contemplative learning in the academic disciplines.

Naropa has traditionally maintained small class sizes (an average of 12.23 students for fall 2008) and a low student-to-faculty ratio (10:1). Even with the 10 percent efficiency work established by the Strategic Plan, average class size is still relatively small: 13.51 students per section for the fall 2009 semester (RR, AA-45).

Naropa considers our small class sizes to be an institutional strength, permitting us to create learning environments that fulfill the aspirations and vision of contemplative education. Our contemplative approach to education often employs group dialogues and processes, artistic expression with one-on-one feedback, reflections between faculty and students, and peer exercises. Some courses ask for a level of personal vulnerability and risk-taking; thus, small-sized classes in which students come to know each other and can build a degree of safety and emotional support are important. The Strategic Plan reemphasizes this commitment with its first “additional objective,” that is, for the University to “provide an intimate educational experience for students with small class sizes and close relationships between students and teachers.”

Class Size

Academic Advising and Retention Services

Academic advisers, distinct from faculty, are provided for all students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; they meet individually with students each semester in order to chart progress through the degree requirements, assist students in choosing appropriate courses, and navigate administrative processes.

Furthermore, academic advising helps students develop personal skills and discipline conducive to academic success. The University provides support services to students on academic probation, including workshops and individual tutoring. Career counseling is also available through the Office of Student Affairs; inexpensive counseling services are available to all degree-seeking students, and the Disability Services Coordinator assists qualified students to gain full access to educational, cultural, and other University programs.

Data from Student Satisfaction Surveys reveal positive views of advising services provided to undergraduate and graduate students during the past five years. In 2008, the last time the survey was administered, 76 percent of undergraduates expressed satisfaction with their advisers’ usefulness in providing administrative information, 78 percent with Core Curriculum information, and 82.9 percent with requirements of the majors. These represent an increase of 10–15 percent of satisfaction from the 2006 survey administration, a time when a new Core Curriculum had been introduced and last-minute changes to major offerings occurred because of a precipitous budget shortfall (RR, SAS-9).

The data are similar for graduate students, who report satisfaction ratings of 85 percent and 78 percent, respectively, for advisers’ knowledge of department requirements and support for student success. Somewhat lower scores (69.3 percent) are found for their assessment of advisers’ personal knowledge of how each student is doing.

There are several institutional responses to these data. In summer 2008, the Vice President for Academic Affairs charged the Office of Undergraduate Advising with providing structured academic support to students on academic probation. Academic Support Program (ASP) services include individual tutoring sessions led by graduate assistants and workshops offered to the entire campus community. Two graduate assistant slots have been allotted to this initiative. The program’s original aim was to prevent probationary students from being academically suspended; in the last year, its reach has been extended to non-probationary students who self-identify as needing support.

During the first year of this program, the graduate assistants facilitated six hour-long workshops, which were open to the entire undergraduate community. Probationary students were expected to attend as a requirement of their participation in the ASP. Workshop topics covered transitioning to college life and aiming for academic success; time management, library research, and study skills; and learning styles. Students were asked to complete written evaluations at the end of the final three workshops. The ASP is using this feedback to shape future workshops (RR, AA-49).
In spring 2009, ASP personnel made contact with 25 students (15 probationary and 10 self-identified or nominated by advisers) to offer individualized academic support. Of those 25, 19 met with graduate assistants for one or more individual sessions. During weekly sessions ranging from 20 to 60 minutes, the graduate assistants worked with students on academic skills, time management, goal setting, and related topics, with an emphasis on helping students cultivate mindfulness about their choices and behaviors pertaining to their studies. Of the nine probationary students who assiduously participated in the program, seven came off of academic probation. The two students who did not only minimally participated (i.e., they met with their graduate assistants three times during the semester). Of the seven participating students who were self-identified or adviser-nominated, five showed an increase in their GPA from the fall to spring semester. The two students who did not show such an increase only met twice with the graduate assistants.

Admittedly, the small number of cases gives some pause when interpreting the quantitative data. Still, there are some hints worthy of optimism. In the future, the ASP plans to reshape its workshops to attract more students, possibly through group tutoring sessions with a specific focus of interest to students in general, not only those on academic probation. In addition, there is a desire for greater outreach to faculty, enlisting their support in encouraging students to attend workshops and also inviting them to offer coaching sessions.

Also, as of spring 2010, ASP is becoming part of a developing and comprehensive retention initiative led by the Office of Undergraduate Education and Office of Undergraduate Advising. Staffed with a retention coordinator, the two ASP graduate assistants, and two retention-focused graduate assistants, this initiative has as its main goals: (1) the creation of an early warning system, using information from other institutions on those “triggers” in the first few weeks of classes that typically signal a need for quick outreach to students; (2) coordination of the responsibility for observing and assisting “at risk” students across faculty, Advising, and Student Affairs; and (3) systematic data collection to enable the University to determine the efficacy of various intervention strategies based on student profiles upon admission and behavior during the semester.

An area of institutional concern is the role that the faculty as a whole plays in providing advising and mentoring services to students. It is clear that individual faculty develop deep and, in many instances, lasting relationships with their students—thus providing guidance about their contemplative practice as well as academic studies. However, the Ranked Faculty does not have a formal role in advising, and the Academic Plan calls for a more robust mentoring system. The latter represents a response to student perceptual data about the vague developmental path through the four years of a Naropa undergraduate degree, inconsistency in how individual faculty integrate contemplative and academic pursuits, and a desire for greater preparation for careers or further study upon graduation. The Undergraduate Oversight Committee is charged with articulating the model of the “journey guide,” the close mentoring and tutorial relationship that the University aspires to create between faculty and their undergraduate students. In addition, the Chairs Council began preliminary conversations in fall 2009 on the possible shift of advising responsibilities for both undergraduate and graduate students from staff to faculty in the next few years.

Naropa recognizes its responsibility to provide support services to students beyond the strictly academic and to examine how various institutional members make use of and perceive these services.

First, the University attends to the specialized needs of students whose native country is other than the United States. An important and valued part of the Naropa community, international students represent approximately 3–5 percent of the total student body on an annual basis; at the time of this writing, these students matriculate from eight different countries. The International Student Adviser, who is housed in the Office of Student Affairs, is available to assist these students. Services include orientation to life in the United States, advice about maintaining immigration status, assistance with University and federal paperwork, and advice about employment and taxation in the United States. The International Student Adviser and the International Student Assistant also assist international students with cultural adjustment and promote cultural activities that help integrate international students into campus life and that allow them to share their unique perspectives and experience.

A second area of support, and one that is gaining attention both within Academic Affairs and Students Affairs, is career counseling. Through analysis of student satisfaction data, Naropa has recently prioritized support for career counseling and preparation. The third goal articulated by the Academic Plan states the institution should “implement the curricular arc in ways that provide students with educational opportunities to prepare for careers, professions, and vocations.” According to the plan: “Students seem especially concerned about life after Naro-
pa. For example, 70.9 percent feel that preparation for graduate school is important, yet only 42.5 percent consider themselves adequately prepared. Nearly three-fourths of students, 72.8 percent of respondents, desire career counseling, but only 21 percent are satisfied with present arrangements" (RR, AA-1).

In 2008, the University hired a new Career Services Coordinator whose charge is to offer more support for students and alumni. At present, all Naropa students and alumni have free access to Career Services, which include exploration of “interests, values, skills, and talents”; identifying “potential academic and career paths”; developing “internship and job search strategies”; helping with application processes; writing cover letters and résumés; and preparing for interviews (naropa.edu/campuslife/career/index.cfm).

Although multiyear comparisons are not available as yet, preliminary data on the new or revamped services offered by the Career Services Coordinator would suggest that the recent changes are having a positive impact. In 2008, the Graduate and Professional School Fair Participant Satisfaction Survey received a 23 percent response rate. Of those, 63 percent of survey participants were “very satisfied” with the event, and 36 percent were “somewhat satisfied.” Career Services used the overall survey data to inform the 2009 fair, which included an expansion of the school invitation list (RR, SAF-17, provides further details about data tracking and analysis).

The Career and Internship Fair Participant Satisfaction Survey administered in 2009 had a 39 percent response rate. Participating students gave high marks to the event, with 24 percent of respondents being “very satisfied” with the fair and 74 percent “somewhat satisfied.” Career Services will use these data in planning the spring 2010 fair.

The Academic Plan validates the need for changes in the undergraduate curriculum itself in an effort to respond to student demand for postgraduation preparation.5 No interpretation of the data leads to the conclusion that Naropa will be-...
Data from Student Satisfaction Surveys indicate stationary levels of satisfaction with these services and the need for further improvement. From 2003 to 2008, the time frame for available data, undergraduate students reported a low of 28.6 percent satisfaction with Naropa’s counseling offerings, rising to 45.7 percent for 2008. For graduate students in this same time frame, the satisfaction scores have hovered between 30.5 percent and 36.6 percent.

In fall 2009, the campus recognized that the number of matriculated war veterans was increasing. A task force consisting of the Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, Dean of Students, Associate Dean of Students, and Director of the Counseling Center met with an expert from the Veterans’ Association to develop a response to this enrollment pattern. Several staff members in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs attended webinar and face-to-face training sessions, and academic advisers had an in-service training on the salient issues. One adviser was asked to serve as the point person for veterans’ needs within the Office of Undergraduate Advising. She attended a day-long training on the needs of combat veterans, with the aim of delivering an in-service to campus staff. On-campus veterans have themselves formed an advocacy and support group.

No assessment data are available for these early responses to the enrollment trend, though it is our intention to monitor the integration of veterans into the classroom and to assess our efforts as these become more defined.

Learning Technologies

Although Naropa’s current curriculum does not include technology-intensive courses (other than online courses), there exist some resources to assist students in computer applications. For some years, the University has recognized the need for better classroom technology, updated computers, and a dedicated helpdesk for help with software applications and training (RR, IT-2). Although we have provided for some of these (e.g., a helpdesk oriented to hardware issues), most of these requests have been given a low priority due to budget constraints and limited resources. The University is in the early stages of commissioning both a thorough technology needs survey and a campus master plan. These are outgrowths of the Strategic Plan and call for modernizing facilities and aligning both the physical plan and technology with the Academic Plan.

There are two computer laboratories for the use of the Naropa community. The main lab is located on the lower level of the Administration Building on the Arapahoe Campus. There is a smaller lab on the Paramita Campus. A total of 54 Windows XP PCs and 3 Macs are available in the main lab, and there are 8 Windows XP PCs and 3 Macs in the Paramita lab. Both labs include laser printers and are configured for Internet access and word processing; they are staffed with lab assistants who are available to help students with the use of the hardware and software.

In addition, there is a reading room at the Nalanda Campus with a total of four Windows XP PCs for student use. Wireless hot spots are located on all three campuses for laptop users with Windows 2000 or higher, Mac OS X or higher, or Linux software.

Although Naropa has improved its technology resources since the last self-study, there are many pending needs in our effort to provide more effective learning environments. In December 2008, the Office of Information Technology adapted the Academic Affairs concept of the Department Systematic Review and provided a self-assessment of its operations, personnel, and hardware and software challenges. The resulting document points to the following learning technology needs (RR, IT-1, 2, and 5):

- Improved management of Naropa websites through having one portal for all sites, a student web service that provides on-campus students with the same services currently available to distance education students (e.g., chat rooms, bulletin boards, places for instructors to place notes and updates, etc.), and easy development of individual faculty web pages;
- “Smart” classrooms and training rooms, including video-conferencing capabilities;
- Access to a personal computer for all faculty, including adjunct faculty, through some combination of dedicated office space and shared cubicles;
- A universal swipe card system that gives students access to the dormitory, library, computer labs, and other services;
- More online (Internet and intranet) course offerings and resources;
- Computer training for faculty, staff, and students;
- Enhancements to the student computer labs;
- Creation of an office, committee, or director of Academic Technology.

We note that one of these items calls for “access to a personal computer for all faculty.” This was deemed a necessary, though minimal, starting point, but it
does not address the fact that many campus computers, for both faculty and administrators, are out of date. A regular replacement cycle has been discussed and, it is hoped, will be included in the technology plan under development.

To some degree, technology resources available to distance education surpass those available for residential students and employees. Naropa contracts with Pearson eCollege to provide online learning technologies for the three low-residency graduate programs and the limited number of Extended Studies nondegree and noncredit course offerings. Pearson eCollege offers tutorials for all students and instructors, asynchronous classrooms, threaded discussions, access to video and audio files, and an online grading tool. In addition, the Allen Ginsberg Library provides web-based learning resources for students enrolled in these courses, and the Naropa University Bookstore offers online book ordering.

All three low-residency online programs are subject to the same DSR process as other degree programs (see Criterion 2). In addition, in spring 2009, the Office of Distance Learning was moved from the School of Extended Studies to the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Director of Distance Learning now reports directly to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This academic oversight has resulted in the completion of preliminary reports representing the unit’s assessment of the learning environment for distance courses at the University (RR, DL-1, 3, and 6).

In addition, integration within Academic Affairs has resulted in a heightened offering of workshops to online faculty, both upon initial appointment and as part of continuous improvement of their existing courses. As of November 2009, 11 online faculty members have completed training through Pearson eCollege, which enables instructors to review and assess a specific online class they have taught. Fourteen faculty members are registered to take the workshop in 2010, leaving only four who have not signed up as of this writing. The workshop provides an assessment tool and best practices for online instruction, as well as support and guidelines for implementing selected best practices in an actual course previously designed and taught by each instructor.

Naropa endeavors to provide learning environments that foster both contemplative and academic development for its students and employees. Although we have many successes to stand behind, we also recognize challenging areas and new opportunities. Naropa is a leader in the field of contemplative education, but our leadership now requires us to develop a more intentional and explicit model to explain the forms and purposes of contemplative learning to our students. In addition, our commitment to diversity is occasionally seen as more rhetorical than actual. The adoption of the Academic Plan is an important step in taking the University in the desired directions.

We must also build learning environments that support students’ preparation for life upon graduation, whether this comes in the form of advanced study, entrepreneurial activity, or a professional appointment. In order to accomplish this, Academic Affairs (specifically, the Undergraduate Oversight Committee) and Student Affairs (Career Services) will need to forge a stronger collaboration than has heretofore been the case. Concurrently, coordinated attention to the needs of students at risk of leaving the University prematurely is required. The recently appointed Retention Coordinator will be responsible for managing services across the campus, identifying weaknesses in our institutional safety net, and collecting data that help us better understand the reasons students choose to leave the University without completing a degree.

Finally, the physical and technology infrastructure only minimally provides the kind of learning environments typical of a modern university. To some degree, the faculty has been hampered in thinking about ways of importing multimedia and Internet-based materials into their courses by the absence of technology-rich classrooms. Though Naropa provides classrooms that are flexible and conducive to face-to-face interaction, they do not facilitate the establishment of a baseline of expectations for students’ mastery of basic technology and information literacy skills, or the faculty’s exploration of mediated sources of information. As the Academic Plan is implemented and as campus master planning and technology planning advance, it is expected that the University community will have a context for discussing the desired infrastructure for the next 10 to 20 years.

CORE COMPONENT 3D – The institution’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

In the past ten years, Naropa has made significant progress in increasing its learning resources. Even though the Allen Ginsberg Library has a small total collection, its holdings are tailored to the University’s unique areas of study, and extensive external resources have been added through online databases, interlibrary loan (ILL) services, and a borrowing agreement with the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU). Also since the last accreditation process, Naropa instituted a Writing Center to provide tutoring and support for students, faculty, and staff and
began the development of a Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education. Finally, a variety of learning resources unique to the University’s mission and curriculum have been generated, including meditation halls, maitri (space awareness) rooms, a consciousness laboratory, and a greenhouse.

Allen Ginsberg Library

The Allen Ginsberg Library has a total collection of slightly more than 33,000 books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials, with holdings that are tailored to Naropa’s unique areas of study—Asian and American Buddhism, arts and spirituality in psychology, and contemporary fiction and poetry. In addition, Naropa subscribes to more than 30 online databases, full-text journals, and finding aids. This compares favorably to the situation in 2000, when the library consisted of 26,000 books, 111 ongoing print subscriptions, and 3,000 or more commercial recordings, and subscribed to only 3 electronic databases.

In recognition of limited resources, the University has expanded bibliographic services through interlibrary loan and a voucher program with CU’s Norlin Library. On average, Naropa fills around 590 interlibrary loan requests for books each year and around 165 requests for articles. The voucher program was initiated in 2005 and allows Naropa students to borrow everything except digital materials from the CU collection. On average, Naropa issues more than 170 CU vouchers per semester. The circulation of Naropa’s own materials during the last complete school year (2008–2009) was 16,236, excluding items on reserve, which is a 22 percent increase over the 1998–1999 circulation of 13,357 items. (See the Introduction of this study, which provides further comparison of 1999–2000 and current data.)

Through a series of grants to the University, significant attention has been paid to the audio archives of teachings by the University’s founder and visiting faculty, as well as the extensive readings and performances that are part of the annual Summer Writing Program. A recent federal grant is funding the first-ever attempt to place administrative records in one central location (RR, ADV-23). In 2007, these efforts resulted in the University Archives being placed securely under the auspices of the Director of the Library. The University Archivist position, currently unfilled because of a recent resignation, is responsible for establishing the University’s retention policies and working with faculty to ensure that archival materials are available for classroom teaching (RR, AGL-5).

Budgetary and human resources available to the Library have seen mixed gains in the last ten years. In 2000, Naropa reported an acquisitions budget of $32,350 for library acquisitions and subscriptions; this budget currently stands at $67,435 for online and print subscriptions along with materials purchases. During that earlier period, the University employed 1.75 FTE individuals with professional librarian degrees (master’s degrees). Currently, 3.0 FTE individuals are allocated to the Library, although 1.0 FTE is paid by a federal grant and continued funding for the 1.0 professional University Archivist position is uncertain. One library assistant and 3.75 FTE work-study students were employed by the Library in 2000. This compares to 2.5 FTE support staff and 4.5 work-study students as of fall 2009.

The Library Director is supported by the Library and Technology Committee, which meets regularly during the academic year and is responsible for providing strategic guidance to Library and Archives staff. The committee also conveys proposals for major initiatives to faculty deliberative bodies, specifically Cauldron (the faculty executive committee). Within the past two years, Library and Archives staff members have:

- Worked on the electronic reserves system to minimize barriers to participation and maximize compliance with copyright law, thereby nearly eliminating the need for printed sourcebooks for classes;
- Purchased additional multimedia equipment (including laptop computers, digital image and sound recorders, and other digital equipment) for classroom and project use and expanded outreach efforts, with the result of dramatic usage increase over three years (931 item uses in 2006, 1,192 in 2007, and 1,806 in 2008);
- Subscribed to streaming music databases to support the performing arts curriculum (1,993 tracks listened to in 19 months, an average of more than 100 per month);
- Purchased a BookSnap digital camera-based scanner to make high-quality image files that can be converted to machine-readable text for visually impaired students;
- Simplified the online interlibrary loan submission process, resulting in 77 percent increased usage by students, faculty, and staff from 2006 to 2008;
Despite these gains, data to assist with future planning for the Library are insufficient to the task, and recent DSR meetings have only begun the process of creating an evaluation and planning template. Questions related to the Library have appeared in the Student Satisfaction Surveys from 2003 to 2006, with data indicating 13.3 percent satisfaction ratings among graduate students in the early study and 29.6 percent in the last one. The 2006 undergraduate survey results confirm that improvements to the Library are necessary: only 42.4 percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of the library, whereas 82 percent considered the overall quality of the library to be somewhat important or very important. The difference between the mean satisfaction and importance scores was the greatest of all the educational resources that undergraduates were asked about.

A 2008 Faculty Library Satisfaction Survey did not measure overall satisfaction, instead asking separately about Library staff, space, and resources. Respondents did indicate a high level of satisfaction with the Library staff, with 91.6 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing that staff members are helpful and courteous. However, 58.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that a more knowledgeable (in effect, a more professional) Library staff would be more effective at providing services. The respondents also had a consistent and critical view of library space and resources. More than 72 percent agreed or strongly agreed that current library space is unacceptable, and 63.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the Library has insufficient resources. It is clear that greater attention needs to be paid to the Library, both in terms of data collection and assessment and in terms of planning and resource allocation. First, Academic Affairs did not conduct a DSR of this unit until December 2008, although the Library filed a planning document in the 2006–2007 academic year. A second DSR was conducted in June 2009. Also, it was not until June 2009 that the interim Library Director was confirmed as a permanent occupant of that position. The completion of the Strategic Plan in fall 2008 and the Academic Plan in Spring 2009 means that there is now a springboard for Library planning, but the University will need to find funding for improvements (RR AGL-3–4).

In this regard, the June 2009 DSR calls for the Library Director to collaborate with the Undergraduate Oversight Committee and other governance bodies charged with implementing the Academic Plan. This plan calls for: (1) greater representation of liberal arts disciplines at the undergraduate level; (2) undergraduate and graduate curricula tied to the six new learning outcomes; and (3) clear communication around the integration of contemplative and academic work. The Library is now poised to develop a planning document that responds and contributes to curricular changes occurring broadly at the University.

Second, either the next administration of the Student Satisfaction Survey must include new questions about Library holdings and services, or an independent study of academic needs for the Library should be initiated. Some benchmark data with a cohort of comparison institutions exist, but these need to more firmly enter into planning conversations. Data prepared for the 2010 DSR indicate that staffing levels are significantly below those of comparable institutions.

Finally, it is hoped that campus master planning will be allocated resources in 2010. Such a planning exercise will provide Academic Affairs broadly, and the Library more particularly, with a realistic opportunity to develop long-term plans for growth in the latter’s footprint. This might include expansion or relocation of the facility on the Arapahoe campus as well as satellites on both the Nalanda and Paramita campuses. Equally important, it is anticipated that fund-raising priorities, now being set in the context of the Academic Plan, will be further shaped by the capital needs developed as a result of the master plan.

Since the last accreditation process, the University established the Naropa Writing Center (NWC). The goal of the NWC is to be an effective resource for all members of the Naropa community (students, staff, faculty, alumni) by providing a collaborative and engaged learning environment for writers of all skill levels. Staffed by trained graduate students (‘fellows’) with extensive writing experience, the NWC assists patrons at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming and organizing to revising and documenting. Staff members provide assistance for all writing genres, such as creative writing, master’s theses, scholarship essays, research papers, and more.
With regard to the support of effective teaching, the University established the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE) in 2005 through a seed grant from the Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism. CACE has served to manifest the University’s mission to be North America’s leading institution of contemplative education. Dedicated to exploring the myriad ways in which contemplative approaches enrich higher education research, teaching, administration, and campus life, CACE has been influential both internally and externally. At the same time, limited resources have hampered its ability to fully carry its vision forward. Intended as a resource for faculty training around contemplative pedagogy, CACE has had several initial successes, including the creation of a general education class that introduces undergraduates to University life from the perspective of contemplative learning (COR 130, Contemplative Learning Seminar) and a summer outreach workshop for faculty at other colleges and universities. However, CACE has not developed a plan for ongoing faculty development and has been without a head for just over a year because of limited continual funding.

From 2005 to 2007, faculty associated with CACE developed the Contemplative Practice Seminar (now renamed the Contemplative Learning Seminar), one of the Core courses required of all Naropa undergraduates. CACE faculty received support to investigate and clarify the diverse methods that instructors and students alike can employ in integrating contemplative and academic work. Although the 2009 Academic Plan calls for even greater attention to defining the outcomes and uses of particular contemplative practices in the classroom, the early work of the CACE faculty and the resulting first-year seminar represent a major step forward in Naropa’s regularization of contemplative pedagogy. CACE has had several initial successes, including the creation of a general education class that introduces undergraduates to University life from the perspective of contemplative learning (COR 130, Contemplative Learning Seminar) and a summer outreach workshop for faculty at other colleges and universities.

CACE is engaged in three outreach activities at present, one of which is largely self-sustaining, and two of which have garnered new funding from the original granting organization, the Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism. These three activities include:

- The number of visits hit a four-year low in 2008-2009, the likely result of the NWC turning away visitors due to understaffing in the spring semester of 2009. Undergraduates comprised 41 percent of the last year’s visitors, and graduate students accounted for 37 percent; 20 percent were unknown; and staff/faculty/alumni constituted less than 1 percent. The total percentage of visits from nonnative English speakers was 17 percent.

- The NWC received high marks on its evaluation forms. Virtually all respondents (98 percent) said they would use the Center again, and 96 percent reported that they would recommend the Center’s services to others. The writing fellows themselves received positive marks. Of the visitors polled, 91 percent felt the writing fellows had excellent interpersonal skills, and 90 percent felt that they were able to facilitate a useful discussion about writing. The lowest overall score, 93 percent, concerned the work environment and available hours. Visitors remarked that the space is small and difficult to concentrate in when two sessions occur at the same time. Visitors also requested more evening and weekend hours. These requests are currently not possible because of lack of funding.

- Currently, all students in the Core Writing Seminars are required to visit the NWC at least once per semester. Studies have shown a positive correlation between a student’s strong relationship with a university writing center and student retention. Also, other classes may require visits at the instructor’s discretion. The NWC Director also works with faculty to incorporate writing across the curriculum and is currently planning a campus-wide examination of how and how often writing is used in all courses.

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The NWC uses both internal and external methods of evaluation, including direct assessment of consultations and fellows’ self-evaluations. In addition, the NWC has a review period where all visitors who use its services are asked to fill out an evaluation form concerning the fellow and the Center itself. The data collected help shape future goals and improve services offered by the Center. The multiyear data presented in Table 3.5 show the community’s use of the NWC in recent years.
outreach activities are:

1. **The Contemplative Pedagogy Summer Seminar.** Originally funded by the first Lenz grant to CACE, the seminar is designed to provide faculty at colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada with a workshop that prepares them to use contemplative pedagogical practices at their home institutions. Both testimonials and survey evaluations collected at the end of each seminar lead us to conclude that Naropa does indeed have a set of practices that are transportable and valuable to other higher education settings. An additional benefit of the seminar is the close collaboration among the participating Naropa faculty and the process of exposing what were heretofore private practices to their colleagues.

2. **The Lenz Foundation Visiting Fellows Program.** Since 2008, Naropa has funded two or three visiting faculty on an annual basis. These individuals complete a research, artistic, or social action project while in residency on the Naropa campus and while interacting with Naropa faculty and auditing courses. The presence of the fellows on campus has stimulated faculty conversations about their pedagogy, and several Lenz Fellows have conducted workshops on teaching for Naropa faculty.

3. **The Lenz Distinguished Lecture Program.** Also since 2008, this program has funded two speakers each year to give one public lecture, to conduct a training program for faculty, and to guest lecture in one or more classes. Designed to enrich the educational experience of our students and development opportunities for our faculty, the lectureship has attracted distinguished scholars of Buddhism in America. During their time on campus, the Distinguished Lecturers have worked with faculty and students on diversity and contemplative education, Buddhism and social engagement, and the history of Buddhism in America.

    When CACE first started, it was led by two grant-funded faculty members and then by a single individual, and it provided stipends to the faculty working on the Contemplative Learning Seminar. As the original grant ran out, the University was only able to fund a stipend for one faculty director. In the last 18 months, no faculty member has stepped forward to lead CACE, in part because of the absence of a fixed funding stream. CACE’s recent budget has been limited to the aforementioned Fellowship and Distinguished Lecture programs, and has been directly administered by the Office of Academic Affairs.

    Given the Academic Plan’s emphasis on continuous reflection on and improvement of the University’s model of contemplative pedagogy, CACE has recently emerged as a fund-raising priority for the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Advancement. The vision is for CACE to become a comprehensive teaching and learning center, supporting both faculty and students in their integration of contemplative modes of teaching and learning with traditional academic disciplines.

### Additional Resources

**Naropa provides a variety of services, personnel, and physical spaces that support teaching and learning. These include the following:**

1. **Contemplative Practice Coordinator.** Naropa’s Office of Student Affairs employs a .5 FTE Contemplative Practice Coordinator who oversees meditation instructors in classes and is available to members of the Naropa community seeking guidance about meditation practice and/or a referral to a meditation instructor (RR, CP-4). The Contemplative Practice Coordinator organizes a number of presentations and activities representing many of the world’s wisdom traditions, including each semester’s Community Practice Day. Faculty members, students, and staff are encouraged to participate in group meditation practice followed by a talk by an invited speaker and a number of activities representing a broad range of contemplative traditions and practices (RR, CP-6).

    Many courses have participation in Community Practice Day built into their syllabi and integrated into the course outlines. Community Practice Day and the Contemplative Practice Coordinator provide an important link between the classroom and contemplative activities.

2. **Performing Arts Center.** Located on the Arapahoe campus, the Performing Arts Center (PAC) is a former gymnasium and auditorium that is flexible enough to host various events (such as midday Town Hall meetings, the beginning-of-the-year convocation, and guest lectures) and performances by University faculty, students, and visiting artists. Academic departments and PAC staff schedule performances and special events, including informal coffeehouses, works-in-progress evenings, poetry readings, theatrical showcases, student dances, and formal arts concerts. It is hoped that the campus master plan will address the needs of the undergraduate and graduate Performing Arts programs for a “black box” theater or other facility. In the meanwhile, the Performing Arts graduate program has built a strong relationship with the University of Colorado’s ATLAS facility, a multimedia performance space.

3. **Meditation Halls.** Since its founding, the University has provided meditation instruction to students, faculty, and staff, in addition to such instruction that may occur as part of regularly scheduled classes. Meditation halls are located...
on each of the three campuses and are also open to visitors. They are generally open for individual use, although occasionally, programs devoted to specific practices may be scheduled in meditation halls.

4. **Maitri Space-Awareness Rooms.** The University has a set of five maitri, or space-awareness, rooms. Maitri (literally, loving kindness) space awareness is a practice that requires training in special postures for each of the specially designed rooms. These practices, and the rooms which support them, are used primarily by students in the graduate Contemplative Psychotherapy and the undergraduate Contemplative Psychology, Early Childhood Education, and Religious Studies programs.

5. **Naropa Community Art Studio.** The Community Art Studio (NCAS) is located on the Nalanda campus and is run by students and faculty from the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology’s Art Therapy track (RR, AA-62). The space was created just after the September 11, 2001, attacks as an institutional recognition of the important role that the arts and art-making play in community healing. NCAS provides a safe place for various members of the Boulder community, including those in rehabilitation or other counseling settings, to gather and create art together. It also provides master’s candidates with an opportunity to practice their craft and to learn how to structure and manage a therapeutic arts space.

6. **The William D. Jones Community Greenhouse.** The Greenhouse began as a project initiated by undergraduate students and faculty in the Department of Environmental Studies. Named for a longtime member of the Board of Trustees, the Greenhouse supports learning opportunities regarding horticulture methods, permaculture, ecological system sciences, and environmental philosophy. It is used as a laboratory for several Environmental Studies courses, and over time is hoped to generate plants for campus landscaping, vegetables for the Naropa Café, and seedlings for the Boulder community. Dedicated in 2009, the Greenhouse’s contribution to the curriculum has not as yet been integrated with learning outcomes assessment.

7. **Community Studies Center.** Community studies and service learning are important elements of Naropa’s undergraduate education. The Community Studies Center (CSC) serves to introduce Naropa students to community-based learning through academic coursework, volunteer opportunities with groups and organizations throughout the Boulder County community, and service-oriented alternatives to spring semester break. The DSR for the CSC acknowledges the awkward fit with the University’s academic infrastructure (the Center oversees staffing for the Civic Engagement seminar, which is actually scheduled by the Office of Undergraduate Education). The Academic

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**Criterion Three**

**Student Learning and Effective Teaching**

Plan calls for heightened attention to the multiple junctures in a student’s four-year journey where skills for “meeting the world as it is” and “changing it for the better” can be practiced. The Community Studies Center is being called upon by the Undergraduate Oversight Committee to build the faculty’s expertise in teaching relevant experiential, field-based courses.

In conclusion, Naropa has taken steps to provide learning resources that support faculty members’ instruction and student learning. Given budgetary and space limitations, the Allen Ginsberg Library has nonetheless managed to develop a successful interinstitutional arrangement with the University of Colorado at Boulder to benefit Naropa users; keep reasonable pace with emerging technology needs; and invest in the preservation of the University’s academic, artistic, and operational documents. Similarly, the Naropa Writing Center, staffed by a dedicated Director and graduate-level Writing Fellows, provides assistance that receives high marks to writers of all levels, though some of its functions are hampered by inadequate space and staffing.

The University contains learning resources that are unique to our mission and curriculum, including meditation halls, maitri space, a greenhouse, and an arts studio. One of our gems, the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education, has the potential of bringing national prominence to Naropa as the leading proponent of contemplative education and as a teaching and learning center for faculty and students. However, the University will need to find a stable source of funding in order to reach this position.

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**Summary and Future Directions**

As narrated within this chapter, Naropa University has made considerable progress in building the effectiveness of our teaching and learning activities. During the past ten years, the percentage of instructional credits generated by Ranked versus Adjunct Faculty has increased, as has the number of faculty with appropriate terminal degrees. In addition, demonstrable progress has occurred in the campus’s development of a critical and self-reflective culture, in which programs are responsible for planning, implementing, and learning from outcomes assessment work and for tying together academic and resource planning through the Department Systematic Review.

The campus conversation around clarifying the nature and purpose of contemplative pedagogy began prior to the faculty’s adoption of the Academic Plan,
when the Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education came into being in 2005. CACE sparked a first wave of attention to the diverse pedagogical practices employed by Naropa faculty and attempted to give shape to these both in the context of the undergraduate curriculum (the creation of the first-year, required Contemplative Learning Seminar) and the offering of training programs for faculty at other colleges and universities. The Academic Plan is now reinvigorating these conversations by structuring planning meetings by the Undergraduate Oversight Committee and the graduate members of the Chairs Council to ensure that all programs meet six basic learning objectives, including one related to a precise delineation of contemplative pedagogy.

The success and challenges experienced by CACE mirror those of other areas of the University. CACE began with a grant from an external funding agency, but the gradual spending-down of that funding has hampered CACE’s ability to serve as a comprehensive teaching and learning center. Similarly, the absence of consistent and ample budgeting for faculty development has meant that Academic Affairs has been unable to adequately support faculty scholarly and creative work or undertake a comprehensive initiative on behalf of faculty cultural change. It is hoped that the first fruits of the Strategic Plan (the 10 percent efficiency budget) will become a permanent line item within the Academic Affairs budget.

Faculty commitment to a rigorous evaluation of teaching and course evaluations is also called for. In fall 2009, Academic Affairs instituted a set of procedures to ensure that the administration of the evaluation forms occurs equitably across departments and courses. Still, the next step is for Academic Affairs and Cauldron (the faculty executive committee) to agree on a revision to the evaluation sheet and a systematic method for analyzing and reporting on the collected data. Semester evaluations should inform faculty development and self-reflection on a regular basis and should not be limited to moments of personnel actions, such as contract renewals and promotion applications.

Finally, technology and campus master planning will need to begin in the next year to ensure that the computer and physical infrastructure is adequate for the kind of teaching and learning that are integral to Naropa’s mission. Although a number of unique learning spaces and resources exist on campus (including the Office of the Contemplative Practice Coordinator, maitri rooms, and the Jones Greenhouse), not all departments and programs have been provided with the specialized classrooms, rehearsal spaces, group activity rooms, and the like that truly can support the curriculum. The challenge is for faculty to assist in the research and planning phases and for the senior management team to locate operational and gift dollars to make those plans come alive.
Naropa University fosters a life of learning that combines contemplative practice with intellectual, artistic, and other creative pursuits. Further, it strives to deepen the synergistic and continuous interplay between conceptual and non-conceptual (direct experience) ways of inquiring, knowing, and acting for all of its constituencies. Naropa’s holistic approach to education is nuanced, broad, and multifaceted. This inherent complexity gives rise to multiple occasions for self-reflection and renewal, as well as to an attitude that accepts change rather than stasis as the natural order of things. All these qualities prepare members of the Naropa community with the sensibility, appreciation, and skills necessary for continuous learning.

This chapter assesses Naropa’s efforts to support lifelong learning among employees, students, and the governing board. It demonstrates that, despite significant resource limitations, the University’s unwavering commitment to contemplative education opens up moments for continuous learning among its various constituencies. The chapter also acknowledges that, whereas great strides have been made in the curriculum offered to students (especially at the undergraduate level), significant work needs to be undertaken to meet students’ expressed needs and to adopt some of higher education’s “best practices.”

In addition, the discussion below shows evidence that planning guides curriculum development at the University, as well as of our commitment to continuous cycles of outcomes assessment and quality improvement.

**CORE COMPONENT 4A – The institution demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.**

All parties associated with the University are provided with opportunities and are encouraged to enrich their knowledge of self and the world around them (in-
Criterion Four

including the institution). As a general rule, formal gatherings (such as the thrice-yearly Board of Trustees meeting or monthly Academic Council meeting), classroom sessions, and both impromptu and scheduled office meetings incorporate opportunities for contemplative practice and the learning that derives from this. These opportunities include the practice of bowing to begin and end classes and meetings (see Criterion 1), which focuses attention on the present circumstance; mindfulness bells that occasionally pause the flow of a discussion to invite momentary self-reflection; and check-ins, which allow participants to recognize for themselves and each other the personal and professional processes in the meeting. Such contemplative practices are not separate from whatever business is at hand. One can be discussing a literary work in a class, enrollment data in a marketing meeting, or financial projections between senior administrators and Trustees ... and, at the same time, acknowledge and reflect upon the impact of that business on one's self and on the group process.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees demonstrates the high value placed on contemplative learning by foregrounding the Mission Statement in its decision-making processes and by incorporating multiple contemplative practices in its meeting structure. These include the following: optional morning meditation before the start of face-to-face meetings, personal check-ins during the first session of each Board meeting, and occasional moments of artistic and creative exploration. Equally important is the Board’s engagement of various consultants over the years to ensure the members’ understanding of best practices in higher education governance and to provide formal processes for self-assessment.

For example, in 2007, the Board felt that it had not been sufficiently engaged in the first phase of strategic planning and, working with the President, selected a consultant to help explore institutional strategy more deeply. A subset of the Board, along with representatives of senior management, faculty, and students, met with this consultant over a nine-month period to develop and analyze institutional data and to tease out strategic implications. This steering committee regularly stayed in touch with the chair of the Board and members of the Vision and Planning Committee to ensure the exploration of deeper levels of meaning around the data and their implications for institutional planning.

Similarly, the Board has engaged the services of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB—a national leader in board development) on several occasions. Meetings between the Board and AGB have included an evaluation of Board structure and functioning and, in preparation for the 2008–2009 presidential search, a review of the University’s progress up to that point, discernment of the criteria for the next president, and agreements on how the Board intended to interact with the new president.

It should also be noted that several members of the Board are leaders in their respective spiritual communities and regularly publish, teach at retreat centers, and conduct workshops in a variety of settings. This is especially noteworthy because, at present, only one trustee (not including the faculty trustee) is employed by an educational institution. These individuals truly embody the spirit of renewal and lifelong learning.

Finally, the Board values the scholarship and artistic expression of Naropa’s faculty and students and strives to stay current with the work being pursued on campus. The Board occasionally asks the Vice President for Academic Affairs to arrange for brief lectures and performances to be embedded in their meeting agendas, and Board members often attend University performances when visiting Boulder. In addition, both a Ranked Faculty member and a current student serve as full members of the Board, and each is given a time slot for presenting a report during Board meetings. The Board seeks to interact with these constituencies in a meaningful way and to receive input and advice from representatives of the two groups. However, some members of the larger faculty body, such as Academic Council, consider the contact between the Board and faculty to be inadequate and wish to promote more effective collaboration and learning.

Faculty

When we turn attention to the faculty itself, the commitment to lifelong learning is apparent both in the expectations for individual faculty members’ development across their careers and in the practices engaged in by the University’s formal governance bodies. First, Naropa is proud of the contributions that the faculty is making to the national conversation about contemplative pedagogy and to their academic disciplines (see RR, AA-61 for a list of examples of publications by faculty on contemplative education). Several Naropa faculty members collaborated on a book on contemplative pedagogy; this forthcoming volume is an edited compilation that explains several instructional approaches and applies them to a variety of disciplines and classroom settings (RR, OTH-4). Other members of the
Ranked Faculty have published book chapters and journal articles, presented at national conferences, and held fellowships with organizations such as the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. A perusal of faculty curriculum vitae reveals publications in the following academic journals: *Art Therapy: The Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*; *Gatherings: Journal of International Community for Ecopsychology*; *Journal of American History*; *Journal of Rehabilitation Psychology*; *Journal of Therapeutic Wilderness Camping: International Journal of Wilderness*; and *The Humanistic Psychologist*. In addition, several faculty members serve on editorial boards for refereed journals.

As noted in Criterion 1, Naropa’s Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE) has worked with a threadbare budget to provide trainings in contemplative pedagogy to higher education colleagues through the summer Contemplative Pedagogy Seminar and the Lenz Foundation’s visiting fellows program. Thus, through the faculty’s scholarship and workshop teaching, Naropa is emerging as an institution that not only employs particular pedagogical practices in bachelor’s and master’s education but also reflects upon these practices and makes available its best thinking to academics at other institutions. Naropa faculty who have participated in the summer workshops also report a sense of revitalization and community resulting from the preparatory work and co-teaching that they experience, which ultimately influences their own classroom teaching.

Some resources are in place to support faculty development and lifelong learning, though as the Criteria 2 and 3 chapters point out, these funds have been extremely limited for many years. Core Faculty members are eligible for a half-year sabbatical at full salary after six years of employment, a full-year sabbatical after thirteen years, and then on a semester basis every six years thereafter. It should be noted that faculty do not compete with each other for sabbatical slots; sabbaticals are granted on the basis of length of service. Sabbaticals enable faculty to more fully engage with current developments in their disciplines and to renew and refresh their formal education, training, and contemplative practice. Faculty members who are granted sabbaticals are encouraged to balance contemplative exploration and academic (or artistic) productivity during sabbaticals in keeping with the institution’s overall intertwining of these two strands.

Ranked Faculty members are also eligible to apply for modest funds to support teaching and professional development. These funds typically allow faculty to present papers at conferences. Because of the competition for limited resources, grants are less likely to be awarded for attendance at conferences or participation in a training experience. This has changed somewhat with the savings that resulted from the 10 percent efficiency actions specified in the Strategic Plan (see Criterion 3). For the 2009–2010 academic year, more than $140,000 is available for faculty development and is being used to support both conference presentations and attendance at workshops and trainings that are valuable to the faculty’s implementation of the multiple strands of the Academic Plan.

The Office of Academic Affairs and the University’s Senior Diversity Officer recently conducted an informal review of faculty training around diversity. It was determined that although there had been a number of excellent programs on this topic in the last few years, the faculty needed encouragement to connect multicultural topics to theories and methods in their disciplines. Academic Affairs and CACE have allocated operational and gift funds to sponsor five faculty grants, ranging from $1,000 to $2,250, through the “Excellence in Teaching and Learning Through Diversity Initiative.” This initiative will leverage the discipline-based work of the awardees by including them in faculty dialogues around curriculum transformation and in a faculty resource book (RR, AA-35).

Naropa takes a broad view of faculty productivity that may include research, publication, performance, teaching, and service. The Faculty Handbook states: “Faculty members, as they ascend through the ranking structure, must increasingly demonstrate a high level of scholarly research and/or creative work, to be evaluated both by faculty and administration within the University, and outside the University, by recognized authorities in one’s chosen field.” The Faculty Affairs Committee, a governance body reporting to Cauldron, is working on both a clarification of this expectation and an increase in the amount of scholarly (or artistic) work that must be demonstrated for personnel reviews. It is likely that, should the criteria be made more rigorous, the University would embark upon a period of grandfathering longtime members of the faculty and gradually increasing the expectations for others.

These developments provide evidence of the faculty’s commitment to increasing its own capacity to serve as contemplative educators in their various academic and artistic disciplines. Further evidence is provided by the trainings that Cauldron (the faculty executive committee) and other governance committees schedule during the monthly Academic Council meetings and the annual faculty retreats. The University regularly offers training to faculty on such topics as diversity, assessment, and student grading, among others. Academic Council, which...
is made up of all Ranked Faculty, divides meeting agendas between committee reports, governance deliberations, and demonstrations of particular teaching and learning practices. The 2008–2009 Academic Council agenda regularly included exercises related to the curricular implications of the Mission Statement and building of the Academic Plan. Training in pedagogy and related topics has also been provided during annual faculty retreats, which rotate on an every-other-year basis between a one-day local meeting and a full weekend away from campus. Finally, specialized training in Internet-based teaching methods is regularly offered to faculty who teach online courses. Most recently, online professors were led through a workshop to analyze and improve one course they had previously taught. This workshop was offered by eCollege, the vendor of Naropa’s online course platform, and was supported by the 10 percent efficiency budget.

Despite these positive signs of the faculty’s efforts at lifelong learning, there are factors that may impede progress. First, faculty mentoring is haphazard, varying greatly among departments. As more and more faculty express an interest in publishing, the institution will need to adopt a more systematic support system, including a change in faculty culture around expectations for scholarly productivity and peer mentoring. One positive sign in this regard is the increasing number of faculty and students who propose research on human subjects and seek institutional guidance. Recently, Academic Affairs formally constituted an Institutional Review Board (IRB), which previously consisted of an ad hoc group of reviewers including the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, and others with empirical research backgrounds. Academic Affairs has agreed to compensate faculty who complete the IRB computer-based training program offered by the National Institutes of Health and who participate in at least two institutional reviews each year.

A second cautionary note increasingly being expressed in several quarters of the institution concerns the importance of attending to the aging of Naropa’s faculty. Given recent and pending retirements of senior faculty, many of whom studied with the University’s founder, a transition plan for maximizing these individuals’ impact on their colleagues is in order. The need for mentoring and a “passing of the torch,” including some means of capturing the wisdom and experience of these senior teachers, must be addressed soon by both Academic Affairs and Cauldron.

Finally, faculty members themselves mention numerous factors that impact their lives of learning and their ability to take advantage of the development opportunities that are provided by the University. In a recent survey, 90 percent of faculty strongly agreed with the statement, “My salary limits my capacity to engage in professional development.” A contributing factor appears to be the prevalence of holding down a second job; 72 percent of faculty strongly agreed with the statement, “I work outside my Naropa faculty position because my Naropa salary is low” (RR, AA-37). These data may explain why, on average, only about a third of the Ranked Faculty request research and travel support each year.

**Criterion Four**

Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

Turning attention to the value of lifelong learning for Naropa’s degree-seeking students, it should first be noted that the recently adopted Academic Plan intends for the University to prepare its graduates for a life of compassionate and skillful engagement with an ever-changing world:

Because our intent is to prepare students to encounter our changing world as skillful and confident participants, we situate learning in contexts that are cultural, historical, and environmental. Naropa graduates translate their learning into gifts dedicated to a just and living world (RR, AA-1, p. 18).

Further, the Academic Plan borrows from the field of creative writing by invoking the notion of a “narrative arc” that Naropa’s students’ are invited to pursue as active participants. The curriculum adumbrated by the Academic Plan calls for a developmental path of learning, not a static accumulation of bits of knowledge:

It is the eventual implementation of the six learning outcomes with an explicit model of learning experiences and milestones at (minimally) three points along a student’s University career that constitutes the arc-like quality of the curriculum. The curricular arc is thus developmental or diachronic, the purpose of which is to help students see the direction and “point” of their education across time (RR, AA-1, pp. 17–18).

Although the undergraduate curriculum will undergo significant modification in the next few years and the graduate curricula will undergo focused efforts at alignment with the Academic Plan, it is worth taking stock of opportunities that the University already provides students that prepare them for a learning-based life. For example, our curriculum provides students with challenging learning opportunities that balance theory and application and that prepare them for leading a full and well-lived life (RR, MD-3). In addition to a range of classroom and homework activities, students learn and demonstrate abilities to make a difference in the world through field placements, practica, internships, and research theses (RR, HB-5, AA-20–21, e.g., ENV 480, PAX 450, PSYB 425, PSYC 858, PSY8 877, PSYT 738c, and PSYT 854).
Second, the oftentimes nonhierarchical relationship between faculty and students positions the latter to be leaders in the development of new learning experiences and projects. Both the Gender and Women’s Studies minor, which admitted students in fall 2009, and the William D. Jones Greenhouse, which was completed and began servicing classes in Environmental Studies in fall 2008, were instigated by the inspiration of Naropa students. Separate student groups petitioned faculty mentors and the senior administration to act on their interests. In the former case, the students and faculty shared responsibility for writing the proposal that worked its way through the curriculum approval process (RR, AA-65). In the latter case, students developed an initial concept and worked with the Office of Advancement to raise the funds for construction costs (RR, OTH-15).

For both initiatives, Naropa faculty and staff summed up the experience by remarking that our students are prepared for leadership roles and ongoing learning upon graduation. At the same time, these experiences have heightened the institution’s desire to study the long-term impacts of a Naropa education. Members of the Academic Affairs, Admissions, and Marketing and Communications units of the University have expressed the desire for a formal alumni outcomes study in order to verify the extent to which Naropa’s classroom and nonclassroom curriculum prepare them for a life of learning and personal growth. The University has recently submitted a grant proposal to study one facet of this complex arena (RR, ADV-25).

Finally, the University provides students with opportunities to extend their learning outside the classroom. The Office of Student Affairs has aligned its learning outcomes with those of the Academic Plan (RR, SAF-3). In addition, in spring 2010, we will pilot a cocurricular transcript that will allow students to document their participation in, and attainment of, various learning outcomes through co- and extracurricular engagement.

**Staff**

The final Naropa constituency to be addressed in this discussion of lifelong learning is our staff. First, the University provides tuition benefits to all employees working at least half-time. These benefits include free and/or discounted registration for Extended Studies courses and tuition remission for employees and family members matriculated in a degree-granting program. The certificate program in Authentic Leadership, offered through Extended Studies, is highly desired by staff members seeking to improve their organizational skills and cultivate their ability for contemplative administration.

Second, staff members are encouraged to attend public lectures, contemplative practice sessions, and such annual events as Convocation, Shambhala Day celebrations, and Community Practice Day. The staff may use the meditation halls located on each of the instructional campuses in Boulder and may request the assignment of a meditation instructor from the Office of Contemplative Practice. In addition, the Office of Human Resources schedules a robust series of training workshops throughout the semester, addressing such topics as computer software, conflict resolution, and team building. As part of an overall orientation initiative, staff in their first semester of employment may enroll in any course that introduces them to Naropa’s fields of study.

Finally, several members of Naropa’s staff engage in lifelong learning by serving as occasional teaching faculty. Many staff members are Naropa alumni, whereas others have come to the campus after having earned advanced degrees (and even serving as professors) at other institutions. These individuals go through an appointment and evaluation process identical to that of Adjunct Faculty; they are expected to demonstrate ongoing mastery of their subject matter and to receive strong student evaluations of their teaching. In 2009, the President and Senior Staff established a policy that limits the number of credits full-time staff may teach (no more than one, three-credit course per semester) and the times of the day when they may teach (outside the normal 9:00 to 5:00 work day). This policy acknowledges the valuable experiences and educational backgrounds that staff bring to Naropa while, at the same time, recognizing that their primary work obligation is to their administrative duties (RR, HR-11).

Naropa University endeavors to offer all members of the institution an opportunity for continuous learning. Even though resources are limited, Board members, faculty, students, and staff are supported in their efforts to learn about themselves, develop their expertise in their chosen fields, and acquire skills and competencies that enhance their contributions to the University and the larger world. In the face of pressures to balance the budget, a continuing challenge is for the University to maintain recent levels of funding for faculty development that resulted from implementation of the Strategic Plan’s financial efficiency model.

A second consideration for the future is the tracking of Naropa’s alumni. The institution was founded on the belief that the integration of contemplative and academic pursuits would benefit individual students and the society in which they live and work. It is now time for the University to put this hypothesis to the test by examining the long-term contributions and consequences of our educational approach.
Criterion Four

CORE COMPONENT 4B – The institution demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its education programs.

At the undergraduate level, Naropa offers students the opportunity to pursue either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, with majors in the following areas:

- Contemplative Psychology;
- Early Childhood Education;
- Environmental Studies;
- Interdisciplinary Studies;
- Music;
- Peace Studies;
- Performance (BFA);
- Religious Studies;
- Traditional Eastern Arts;
- Visual Arts;
- Writing & Literature.

At the graduate level, students may complete one of three designated master’s degrees:

- Master of Arts (Contemplative Education, Contemplative Psychotherapy, Environmental Leadership, Religious Studies, Somatic Psychology, Transpersonal Counseling Psychology, and Transpersonal Psychology);
- Master of Divinity;
- Master of Fine Arts (Creative Writing, Contemporary Performance, LeCoq Actor Created Theater, and Writing & Poetics).

All programs provide students with exposure to the appropriate theories and methodologies of the chosen field of study, as well as means to integrate this knowledge with personal learning. A rigorous program of outcomes assessment and program planning, known as the Department Systematic Review, ensures that degree programs take shape around identifiable and assessable student learning outcomes. In addition, during the 2009–2010 academic year, the Office of Academic Affairs initiated external program reviews of two degrees (the MDiv and MFA in Writing & Poetics) in an effort to study whether Naropa’s curricula are both mission-appropriate and representative of the best thinking in the respective fields. These are intended to become a model for a cycle of program reviews for all degrees. (See Criterion 3 for further discussion of the Department Systematic Review and the recently initiated program review procedure.)

Undergraduate Education

Students at Naropa University are challenged and supported in their academic development. Undergraduate and graduate students alike report satisfaction with the curriculum’s intellectual challenges and their own intellectual development at Naropa (RR, SAS-10). Naropa has offered the full four-year degree only since 1999. The past ten years have seen multiple attempts to define the core of the undergraduate curriculum. Since 2006, the general education requirements have been stable, and adjustments have occurred only in the syllabi for particular courses rather than in the overall structure of the program.

The Core Curriculum, as Naropa’s general education is known, requires the completion of 33 credit hours and provides an introduction to both Naropa’s distinctive educational vision and traditional college subjects. Students must complete 18 credits of Core Seminars, which cover university-level writing, modes of contemplative learning, diversity, civic engagement, and modes of scholarly inquiry (the admittedly misnamed humanities course). In addition, a distributional requirement provides students exposure to the range of disciplines and ways of knowing found in the academy. From a menu of options, undergraduates complete 3 credits each from the following 5 areas (for a total of 15 credits):

- Artistic Process;
- Body-Mind Practice;
- Cultural and Historical Studies;
- Scientific Inquiry;
- World Wisdom Traditions.
This approach to general education, and three of the Core Seminars in particular, place the following curricular themes or mandates at the center of Naropa's undergraduate education:

1. The ability to engage in learning from a contemplative perspective;
2. The importance of situating oneself in relationship to cultural and societal systems of difference;
3. The cultivation of compassion and skill to engage productively with various segments of the world.

This tripod manifests the aspiration in the Mission Statement for “Naropa students [to] explore the inner resources needed to engage courageously with a complex and challenging world, to help transform that world through skill and compassion, and to attain deeper levels of happiness and meaning in their lives” (RR, MD-1). Further, the remaining distributional areas provide students with the knowledge, skills, and methods to “meet the world as it is,” i.e., to engage in observation, critical inquiry, and explanation.

However, the two years of strategic and academic planning that culminated in the 2009 Academic Plan provide evidence that the University has not built sufficient breadth or depth into the implementation of the above curricular view. Although the Core Curriculum provides suitable foundational coverage of the topics noted above, as well as considerable choice for students to fulfill the distributional areas, there is general consensus among the faculty that it is in need of further refinement and expansion. First, the Academic Plan notes that the three foundational themes do not, in all cases, track beyond the introductory level. More specifically, there is no guarantee that once the Core Seminars have been completed, students will have opportunities (or be held to requirements) to deepen their familiarity with contemplative learning methods, diversity, or civic engagement. The Academic Plan’s curricular arc, when fully implemented, will place students on a path from introductory to advanced courses, with appropriate milestones in reaching and demonstrating the prescribed learning outcomes (RR, AA-1 and 45).

It is also the case that Naropa's undergraduate course offerings must be broadened. Perusal of the courses that fulfill the “Cultural and Historical Studies” area requirement shows the absence of some traditional coursework in the behavioral and social sciences. No coursework in anthropology, history, political science, or sociology is taught at the present time. A similar criticism can be laid on the courses for the “Scientific Inquiry” requirement; a handful of courses in Environmental Studies and Psychology are available to students, though no laboratory courses in Biology, Chemistry, Geology, or Physics currently exist. Both faculty and students are aware that a broadening of the undergraduate curriculum is in order, and specific actions to address this need have been planned. Over the next several years, coursework will be added in the natural sciences, world languages, and the behavioral and social sciences (RR, SAS-31 and AA-45).

In addition, as one student who assisted with strategic planning noted, “Naropa’s undergraduate education needs a stronger ‘through-line.’” In addition to deepening students’ expertise in the University’s core areas of study, this comment points to a call for culminating and integrative learning experiences where students utilize previous coursework and demonstrate preparedness for a professional path or further study (e.g., graduate study). The Academic Plan responds to this challenge by proposing a set of minors in applied fields (e.g., leadership, social entrepreneurship, social activism). A second proposal is for all departments to require a capstone seminar or thesis that at present is required of some, but not all, majors.

To some degree, the undergraduate curriculum is strongest in the majors; this is also where the most attention to learning outcomes assessment has been placed (see Criterion 3). This strength is due in part to the considerable faculty investment and skill in teaching within a particular field of study because Naropa offered the last two completion years of a bachelor's degree long before mounting the full four-year program. Although students occasionally complain that readings across different courses are repetitive, they are also fairly positive about their majors (RR, SAS-9).

Courses in the majors are structured to progress from introductory to advanced treatment of the subject matter, and include options for both academic and applied courses. Appropriate to undergraduate education, departments offering majors attempt to provide students with a range of courses representative of the discipline. For example, the Department of Writing & Poetics housed within the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics is a training ground for future authors, editors, and publishers, and it requires students to have reasonable exposure to world literature and literary theory in addition to engaging in writing workshops. Similarly, depending on the track within the Department of Contemplative Psychology, students take courses that range from scientifically oriented topics (e.g., perception, statistics, scientific research into consciousness) to more academic planning that culminated in the 2009 Academic Plan provide evidence that the University has not built sufficient breadth or depth into the implementation of the above curricular view. Although the Core Curriculum provides suitable foundational coverage of the topics noted above, as well as considerable choice for students to fulfill the distributional areas, there is general consensus among the faculty that it is in need of further refinement and expansion. First, the Academic Plan notes that the three foundational themes do not, in all cases, track beyond the introductory level. More specifically, there is no guarantee that once the Core Seminars have been completed, students will have opportunities (or be held to requirements) to deepen their familiarity with contemplative learning methods, diversity, or civic engagement. The Academic Plan’s curricular arc, when fully implemented, will place students on a path from introductory to advanced courses, with appropriate milestones in reaching and demonstrating the prescribed learning outcomes (RR, AA-1 and 45).

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humanistic content (e.g., transpersonal psychology, family systems, Gestalt theory). Finally, students majoring in Environmental Studies complete courses drawn from philosophy (e.g., deep ecology), the natural sciences (e.g., plant ecology, geology), and the social sciences (e.g., history of the environmental movement, indigenous environmental issues).

In summary, Naropa contends that in both its undergraduate general education and major programs, students are provided with a broad set of knowledge and skills that enable them to understand and engage with the world in ways that are systematic and rigorous. The Criterion 3 chapter provides further evidence that a majority of departments adequately assess their students’ learning outcomes to ensure that the faculty’s goals are actually being met by the curriculum. At the same time, we recognize that areas of the undergraduate curriculum need enhancement. The Academic Plan articulates six learning outcomes that are integral to a Naropa education and proposes that students be provided with learning experiences (formal coursework as well as co- and extracurricular experiences) that incrementally enable them to build toward attainment of each. Further, the Academic Plan calls for a significant expansion of available coursework in behavioral and social sciences beyond psychology as well as adding coursework in laboratory science; mathematics; world languages; and capstone experiences in such fields as leadership, social activism, and entrepreneurship.

Graduate Education

It is difficult to provide a generalizing statement about the breadth and depth of graduate education because of the distinct fields of study represented at the graduate level. The discussion below clusters similar programs and speaks to the intellectual rigor, breadth, and depth of these clusters of Naropa’s graduate programs.

The program in Environmental Leadership is a 2-year, 39-credit campus-based program that prepares the next generation of environmental activists and leaders. It was relaunched in 2007 after a one-year hiatus in admitting students and a significant program review and revision that included an alumni survey, interaction with national leaders in the environment field, and extensive faculty deliberations (RR, AA-67). Key elements of the curriculum include students’ development of broad expertise in organizational dynamics, leadership, and systems change, as well as specific knowledge of sustainability policy, political ecology and cultural applications. There are three learning goals: (1) knowledge of the cultural, economic, diversity, policy, and scientific dimensions of environmental issues; (2) demonstration of effective leadership skills to transform communities and effect policy; and (3) adoption of contemplative and ecopsychological practices that foster students’ personal capacity for reflective and participatory leadership, as well as a commitment to environmental justice. A professionally oriented program, the degree requires that students apply their skills and knowledge to an experiential leadership project in their second year.

Naropa created the Graduate School of Psychology (GSP) in fall 2006 as a way to forge collaborations between the three departments that offer graduate-level counselor education (Contemplative Psychotherapy, Somatic Counseling Psychology, and Transpersonal Counseling Psychology)1 and to explore approval by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). All three programs require three years of study, prepare graduates for licensure as professional counselors, and combine academic coursework with clinical practica and internships. Although the faculty elected not to pursue CACREP accreditation (principally because the agency does not accredit administrative units such as schools and would not accredit three discrete counseling programs on the same campus), the curricula have largely been aligned with CACREP standards. All the programs also align with the criteria for the Colorado Licensed Professional Counselor certification.

Examples of shared learning outcomes across the three degrees include the following: (1) familiarity with a wide range of theoretical orientations to human psychology, diagnosis, and counseling practice; (2) development of a personal contemplative practice that informs students’ future work as clinicians; (3) demonstration of counseling skills suitable to working with clients from diverse backgrounds and in a wide range of settings; and (4) maintenance of appropriate standards of practice, professional boundaries, ethical decision-making, and self-care. In addition, each program has its unique approach to counseling, and so students also develop both understanding and applicable skills relevant to a specific concentration, such as Art Therapy, Buddhist Psychology, Dance Therapy, or Wilderness Therapy. Conversations have begun by the departments to share certain courses, such as research methods, assessment and diagnosis, and practicum/internship.

1 The Transpersonal Psychology track in the Department of Transpersonal Counseling Psychology is unique among the GSP programs in that it is not a clinically oriented program but rather concentrates on theories and nonclinical applications of transpersonal and ecopsychology. It is taught through a combination of online and intensive residential sessions.
Criterion Four

It is not surprising that we grant the MFA degree, given Naropa’s commitment to the arts and the artistic traditions, from both Asia and the West, that were an integral part of our early offerings as an Institute. Naropa delivers this terminal arts degree in two major fields: Theater and Writing. Each degree program is staffed by faculty with both academic and industry (i.e., performing arts or publishing) backgrounds, regularly invites visiting artists to campus, and prepares students for creative expression and a personally fulfilling life. Two MFAs in theater are offered, one in Boulder and one in the United Kingdom, with both providing training in contemporary performance. The programs are oriented toward students’ development of interdisciplinary performance skills rather than a single performance focus. This interdisciplinary approach focuses on acting, movement, space awareness, voice, and “self-scripting.”

The Lecoq Actor Created Theater program, located in London, is based on the groundbreaking physical theater pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq and is taught by two of his former students in association with the London International School of Performing Arts. (See Introduction for a discussion of notifications around the closure of the Lecoq program.) Developmental in nature, the curriculum is divided into two components. The first-year initiation course orients students to the relationship between the body and the actor/creator’s imagination, and the second-year advanced course focuses on creativity by exploring comic and tragic genres from both classical styles and contemporary styles. Students complete both years with workshop performances that they have designed.

The Contemporary Performance program, located in Boulder, includes techniques and influences from a number of performance methods, including contemporary dance. “Viewpoints” technique, and several schools of acting and vocal work. Partnerships with a number of nationally renowned theater companies and directors, including Kasura Kan, Moises Kaufman’s Tectonic Theater Project, and Meredith Monk, ensure that students interact with and are directed by the field’s high-profile figures.

Learning outcomes common to both MFA programs include students’ mastery of: (1) a wide repertoire of professional skills in acting, dance, physical movement, and voice; (2) a performance sensibility as evidenced by the ability to engage in improvisation and the creation of novel textual materials; and (3) a traditional contemplative practice that provides inspiration for their creative work and ensures coordination between body and mind.

Both the MFA in Writing & Poetics and the MFA in Creative Writing (a low-residency program) offer broadly similar curricula in creative prose and poetry, the primary difference being the method of delivery. The residential program offers concentrations in poetry, prose, and translation; the low-residency (partially online) program does not permit a formal concentration. Both programs seek to cultivate writers with a broad understanding of form and technique and the skills to serve as writers, editors, publishers, and teachers. Students are encouraged to cultivate their creativity through the development of a contemplative practice. Oftentimes, the act of writing itself is viewed and approached as a contemplative practice, as is the case in the course Contemplative Poetics. Additional learning outcomes include: (1) a view of writing as a lifelong process; (2) presentational skills for teaching or public readings; and (3) an appreciation for literary criticism and multiple genres, forms, and expressions. In support of its students’ professional preparation, the MFA sponsors two literary magazines, Not Enough Night and Bombay Gin, which provide opportunities for editing as well as to be published.

The Department of Writing & Poetics is one of two departments at the University that schedules a large number of cross-listed courses (i.e., available for undergraduate or graduate credit). (See Introduction for a full discussion of the institutional response to cross-listing.) The Office of Academic Affairs has proposed that the department allow MFA students to register for either residential or online courses each semester as a way to ensure adequate enrollment in graduate classes and an appropriate separation between undergraduate and graduate classes. The department is currently undergoing an external program review, and it is anticipated that it will coax the department into a curriculum review and stronger bifurcation of undergraduate and graduate education.

Cross-listing has also been an issue for the Department of Religious Studies, one of the oldest and most distinguished departments at Naropa. Religious Studies offers two distinct graduate programs, one focused on theory, theology, and preparation for advanced study, and one focused on a professional or applied degree. The former confers the MA in Religious Studies and offers tracks in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism and general Contemplative Religions. It employs both a history of religions approach and a traditional Tibetan monastic style to offer students a deep and thorough understanding of the varieties of religious experience and doctrine. Students in the general program may take courses not only in Buddhism
but also in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, especially the esoteric or contemplative dimensions of these religions. Although students enter this program with a diverse set of personal goals, the program is structured as a predoctoral program and has had success in recent years placing students at top institutions for Religious Studies and Buddhist Studies, including Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of California–Santa Barbara. The program requires the completion of either 45 or 61 credits, depending on whether the student elects language (Sanskrit or Tibetan) study. A major reorganization of the curriculum that went into effect in fall 2009 has significantly reduced the number of cross-listed courses (see Introduction).

The department’s Master of Divinity degree is a 3-year, 78-credit program and prepares students for work as professional chaplains in a variety of contexts, such as religious centers, health care institutions, and the armed forces. Although the theological grounding of the core curriculum is rooted in Buddhism, students may elect courses in other religious traditions represented by the faculty. In addition, interreligious dialogue is a key underpinning of the program, and through the applied coursework, students are exposed to the broad interfaith contexts and practices of contemporary chaplaincy. Students complete a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) internship between their second and third years of study, and many have gone on to complete post-master’s CPE training and have found work as professional chaplains or chaplain supervisors.

Across these two programs, the following common learning outcomes can be discerned: (1) broad knowledge of the doctrine and contemplative practices of Buddhism; (2) experiential and intellectual understanding of contemplative practice; and (3) the capacity to engage in religious studies scholarship that is culturally sensitive, aware of the relationship between practice and theology, and informed by the historical methods in the field. Divinity students and those in the generalist (Contemplative Religions) track of the MA also gain knowledge of the doctrines, contexts, and practices of a number of different religious traditions as well as skills at interreligious dialogue.

In summary, all of Naropa’s graduate degree programs aim to prepare students for further study at the doctoral level or professional careers (e.g., as chaplains, counselors, theater artists, or writers), with licensure a goal for several programs. Thus, they integrate advanced knowledge of the theory and methods of their respective disciplines with applied opportunities, such as clinical internships, per-
Criterion Four

CORE COMPONENT 4C – The institution assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.

Naropa has greatly increased the sophistication with which it approaches curriculum building by augmenting the number of personnel who assist in program planning and assessment and by securing a variety of research resources in its planning processes. Revamped learning goals and outcomes and means to achieve these are found in the recently adopted Academic Plan, which makes use of both institutional data and best practices reports in higher education to shape the future of the curriculum. Similarly, recent exploration of new continuing education offerings and a new delivery system for the Transpersonal Counseling Psychology program has been influenced by market studies conducted by an external researcher (RR, AA-42–44).

A careful reading of the Academic Plan demonstrates the depth of reliance on student assessments of and satisfaction with various aspects of their Naropa degree programs. For example, combined qualitative and quantitative data indicate that undergraduates consider Naropa’s curriculum to be somewhat “flat,” with the directional purpose or trajectory of the programs not always clear. Preparation for a viable career path is reported to be important to undergraduate students, as is more explicit instruction on how contemplative and academic work interact and inform each other. Specific actions proposed by the Academic Plan to assist students to forge a bridge to careers, professions, and graduate study include the following: requiring capstone experiences in the majors; creating minors in such fields as leadership, entrepreneurship, and social activism; building a close partnership among academic departments, Alumni Relations, and Career Services; and integrating the idea of a cocurricular transcript with the curricular arc (RR, AA-1 and SAF-29).

Diversity, Globalization, and Technology in the Curriculum

Diversity is a key value in Naropa’s Mission Statement, and it is a criterion in terms of curriculum, student enrollment, and retention used by the annual Department Systematic Reviews. Based on a 2008 survey, most undergraduate students (70 percent) are satisfied with the presence of diversity in the curriculum (RR, SAS-9), as are the majority (78 percent) of graduate students (RR, SAS-10). From the perspective of outcomes planning, an overwhelming majority of the University’s degree programs have achieved an explicit delineation of diversity learning goals. Initial meta-analysis of undergraduate and graduate program goals shows that 80 percent (16 out of 20 assessment units) appear to have achieved an explicit delineation of diversity-themed learning goals or outcomes (RR, DSR-1).

The next step is to ensure departments’ compliance with and implementation of their goals (i.e., that student learning truly demonstrates attainment of those goals).

Diversity permeates coursework at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. As noted above, it is one element of the undergraduate tripod, representing a Core Seminar required of all first-year students. The recently approved Gender and Women’s Studies minor resulted from recognition by both faculty and students of the importance of this field to carrying out Naropa’s diversity commitments. At the graduate level, awareness of diversity issues can be found in the interreligious dialogues orientation in the Department of Religious Studies; the required or elective courses in the Graduate School of Psychology (PSYC 650, “Diversity Awareness and Multicultural Competence”; PSYT 517e, “Multicultural Issues: Contemplative Approaches”; PSYT 721, “Social and Cultural Foundations in Counseling”; and PSYS 628, “Diversity, Oppression and the Body”); and the general exposure to performance artists and writers from across the globe in the MFA.

Diversity issues are addressed in three of the six learning outcomes delineated in the Academic Plan. Therefore, it is anticipated that rather than being addressed in an isolated course or two, departments will begin to infuse multicultural topics into various courses. The faculty has specified intra- and interpersonal capacities as one of six overarching learning outcomes: “Graduates are able to effectively communicate as individuals and in collaboration with others through empathetic listening and inquiry, embodied deep listening and dialogue, and intercultural competency in diverse groups” (RR, AA-1). As previously noted, carrying out the Academic Plan on the undergraduate level is the responsibility of the Undergraduate Oversight Committee, which is examining ways to ensure that diversity (along with the other curricular goals) are found in core courses and permeate more advanced courses. At the master’s level, the Department Systematic Review, which traditionally focuses on departments’ curricular alignment with the Mission Statement, will use the Academic Plan as the benchmark for reviewing upcoming graduate curriculum changes.
Global concerns are, in part, addressed by the overwhelmingly systemic and non-dualist perspective that permeates Buddhist-inspired thinking. Simply put, students learn to experience themselves as connected to other humans and to the planet and to hold responsibility for the sustainability of individuals, communities, and the environment. According to the faculty’s vision of contemplative education, Naropa values ecological awareness and offers an “educational path [that] focuses on … ecological sustainability … and the application of learning to real world settings” (RR, AA-1). The ultimate goal of higher education at Naropa includes a reverence for the Earth and a commitment to sustainability (RR, MD-3).

At the curricular level, these values are strongly implemented in the undergraduate program and less so in the various graduate programs. The Core Curriculum tripod offers students an opportunity to learn about themselves, understand relationships with others who are inherently different from them, and engage in service on behalf of communities and the planet (RR, AA-53). Comparably, the University provides students with cocurricular opportunities for training and practice in sustainability, diversity, and social responsibility. Residents of the Naropa dormitory are provided cocurricular programming that focuses specifically on social justice through a restorative justice model.

There are other initiatives that speak to Naropa’s alignment with global and environmental concerns. In April, the University’s Earth Day is expanded into a full week of coordinated activities, including lectures, demonstrations, and an ecology fair. We invite the general public, including children, to campus for these events (RR, SUN-14). Naropa’s dedication to environmental sustainability is evidenced by former President Thomas Coburn’s signing of the Presidents’ Climate Commitment. We are working toward zero waste on campus, and as a result of student leadership, the University held the top 5 positions in 3 different categories of the 2008 Recycling Mania Competition, where we participated along with 400 of the nation’s top universities.

Another view on global education comes from study abroad, which has historically been an important complement to our educational offerings, with programs over the years located in Bali, Nepal, Sikkim, and Prague. The two most recent ones, in Sikkim and Prague, were closed in the last three years because of the flawed educational and financial model (RR, AA-27–28). Although Naropa prided itself on overseas offerings, the institution did not structure study abroad in ways that encouraged our own students and faculty to participate, instead promoting the programs to students matriculated at other universities and relying on non-Boulder-based faculty.

A commitment to strengthening study abroad and making it more integral to Naropa students’ journey persists, finding expression in the recently adopted Academic Plan. Now that the plan has been completed, an ad hoc task force has been working toward a proposal for short-term study abroad opportunities tied to specific departments’ curriculum. This will allow us to plan for curriculum that meets our obligations and desires with regard to global education. In the meantime, in order to support students considering study abroad programs, a staff member was appointed in fall 2008 to assist students in locating, applying to, and completing the necessary consortia contracts with other institutions. As of fall 2009, this position is held by a staff member within the Office of Undergraduate Education, with a dotted reporting line to the Office of Undergraduate Advising.
for taking exams and checking results; and means of creating “webliographies,” sharing documents, and accessing the Help Desk.\(^2\)

**New Program Development**

A final issue to be addressed in this section is the process that Naropa follows in creating new academic programs and in reviewing existing ones, especially in light of the diversity, globalization, and technology changes impacting the world we prepare our students to enter. First, we should note the faculty’s awareness of, and willingness to respond to, external forces transpiring on the world stage. For example, the faculty began preliminary discussions on the need for a degree program in Peace Studies almost immediately after the horrific events of September 11, 2001. Similarly, the MA in Environmental Leadership was completely revamped in 2006–2007 in response to alumni and industry encouragement to prepare students with the ethical leadership, and not simply technical skills, that the environmental movement lacks. Third, the Enrollment Management Team, working with Academic Affairs, targeted the MA in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology as a program ripe for enrollment growth. The goal is to meet the lifestyle needs of working adults, many of whom may come from underrepresented populations.

Equally important in this regard are the steps the University has taken to terminate programs that do not meet a student need or reasonable expectations for academic rigor. The MA in Interdisciplinary Studies began as a pilot in 2001 but never sought the Higher Learning Commission’s approval. However, instead of applying for this recognition, the current Academic Affairs administration reviewed the enrollment history and curriculum and chose to terminate the degree.

As noted in the Introduction, the University did not contest the comments made by the 2007 site team but more importantly had already made the decision prior to the team’s campus visit that the resources available to the program were not commensurate with the needed curricular changes. A second example of careful program reduction is the MA in Gerontology and Long-Term Care Management, which lacked robust student enrollments and had not attracted the industry support that had originally been anticipated (RR, AA-58).

Naropa judiciously creates new academic programs. Although the Strategic Plan calls for considerable growth in enrollment, pointing to online education in particular as a vehicle for achieving this growth, Academic Affairs and the Enrollment Management Team have proceeded cautiously (RR, AA-14 and 16). We are implementing the Strategic Plan conservatively in recognition of HLC concerns expressed a decade ago about potential adverse consequences to our adding too many new programs too quickly (RR, SS-54).

The Enrollment Management Plan, which serves as the second part of the Academic Plan, initially projects enrollment growth through better retention and increased enrollment in existing programs. At the same time, a deliberative process has begun to explore new program options. During spring 2009, the Chairs Council established an ad hoc task force to solicit ideas from faculty and staff. In fall 2009, the newly hired Assistant Dean of Program Development and Strategic Initiatives began working with the list of suggestions to establish a somewhat more inclusive and mission-directed approach to the matter. Specifically, the Vice President for Academic Affairs charged the Assistant Dean with the task of creating a process that would elicit the community’s thinking on “what new programs are the next logical outgrowth of the commitments expressed in the Mission Statement, and what new programs does the world call upon Naropa to offer?”

In addition, Academic Affairs and Cauldron have clarified the process and multiple levels of review that any proposal for new degree programs must follow (RR, AA-16). The current process distinguishes undergraduate and graduate faculty’s involvement in curriculum recommendations and requires broad involvement of the major administrative units of the University (e.g., Admissions, Business and Finance, Financial Aid, and Marketing and Communications) before proposals are submitted to the appropriate Curriculum Committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President, and the Board of Trustees.

Naropa recognizes that changes external to the University—including growing attention to multiculturalism, globalization, and technology—must shape internal curriculum decisions. Most academic programs offer courses that support students’ attainment of diversity learning outcomes, and the Academic Plan has established a framework for planning study abroad opportunities for delivering on global outcomes. Technology outcomes are underdeveloped in existing curricula, and the Library and Technology Committee has been charged with working with

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\(2\) Naropa chose to subscribe to eCollege because of the technical support it provides both the University and its matriculated students. Pearson eCollege provides a help desk that is available to online students, instructors, and administrators 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year (including holidays). The help desk technician can be contacted by phone, e-mail, or live chat whenever an issue arises.
Ranking Faculty in examining this issue and developing appropriate curricular responses.

Finally, the University has developed a rigorous system of program assessment and planning. These include a new curriculum approval structure (RR, AA-16), reliance on external market studies, and the appointment of the Assistant Dean of Program Development and Strategic Initiatives. It will be important for the University to adhere to its governance and management processes recently put in place as the Strategic Plan’s calls to increase enrollment are implemented.

**CORE COMPONENT 4D – The institution provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.**

This section discusses the ethical issues germane to the application of knowledge at Naropa University. Foundational to our approach to academic ethics is the contribution that contemplative education is meant to make to students’ development and practices related to personal integrity. In harmony with this view, Naropa’s mission documents guide all members of the institution toward ethical behavior. Specific policies and procedures support academic integrity in both teaching and learning. Further, we strive to support the responsible conduct of research, performance, creative work, and other professional activities. The University supports responsible engagement with the surrounding community and now holds ethical application of learning in real-world settings as an overarching objective.

Naropa highlights ethical dimensions of human identity and relationships as essential to education for the twenty-first century (RR, MD-3). Employee training addresses issues of integrity—for example, in dual relationship policies, which are clearly documented in the Employee Handbook and Faculty Handbook and widely discussed in orientation and similar sessions. Further, both faculty and staff employees are oriented to limits on the disclosure of confidential information, whether during or after a person’s employment at the University or a student’s matriculation in or graduation from a degree program. Information that is not generally known to or accessible by the public or information that is made confidential by law, such as by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), are subject to nondisclosure by Naropa employees.

In addition, as outlined in our Policies and Procedures Handbook, the University’s “View of Right Action” applies to the entire community—students, staff, faculty, and trustees (RR, HB-4). These guidelines are considered essential to the ethical and humane functioning of a community and form the basis for disciplinary actions and/or grievances.

**View of Right Action**

The View of Right Action guidelines define and support a view of society that is just and encourages all Naropa employees to:

- Arouse respect for teachers, the wisdom of many traditions, and all who seek wisdom. Honor the process of learning;
- Seek out and practice disciplines that benefit yourself and others;
- Be true to your inspiration. Apply yourself wholeheartedly. Enjoy yourself. Don’t be afraid to take a risk;
- Assume responsibility for your state of mind and all of your actions;
- Speak gently and thoughtfully;
- Refrain from slander. Maintain your dignity;
- Be generous to all without prejudice;
- Do not waver in meeting your obligations;
- Be law-abiding and humble and act with decorum;
- Be decent and trustworthy with friends, family, the members of the Naropa University community, and society at large.

Contemplative education targets the cultivation of personal and institutional integrity. Our faculty understands this obligation and specifies the ethical application of learning to real-world settings as part of an overarching learning objective in the Academic Plan (RR, AA-1). The curricular goals and objectives for some departments already include ethical considerations (see, for example, RR, DSR-2 (Interdisciplinary Studies), DSR-3 (Religious Studies), DSR-4 (Transpersonal Counseling Psychology)), and it is expected that the unfolding of the Academic Plan will ensure further permeation of this value across Naropa’s curricula. Additionally, numerous courses explicitly address ethical concerns (RR, AA-20: COR 113B, ENV 342, PAX 340, PSYB 301, PSYS 687, etc.). Students are required to follow a customary policy for avoiding plagiarism, whether intended or accidental (RR, HB-1, p. 68).

The University strives to support the responsible conduct of research, performance, creative work, and other professional activities. In the past, we assembled ad hoc teams to review proposed research projects, including those from students at other institutions wishing to study Naropa’s distinctive curriculum. The Assistant Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, who completed the National
Institutes of Health’s (NIH) web-based Clinical Research Training Online Course for Principal Investigators, coordinated this work until the past year. Recognizing the increasing number of proposals received by the Assistant Dean and the appropriateness of moving from an ad hoc to a standing committee, the Vice President for Academic Affairs initiated a new procedure in fall 2009. Faculty from the arts, humanities, and social sciences were asked to self-nominate (along with faculty from psychology, where the bulk of empirical research is conducted at Naropa) and constitute a formally recognized Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB members are required to complete the NIH certification process and be available each year to review two to three proposals in teams.

Finally, the University supports responsible engagement with the surrounding community. Our Community Studies Center provides important support for social engagement and service learning and monitors student work in the community (RR, OTH-3). Policies and personnel are in place to assess and address complaints that may arise in connection with internships and field placements (RR, SAF-33). Student residents of Naropa’s residential housing are provided co-curricular programming that focuses specifically on community connection, with a specific focus on communal opportunities in the Goss-Grove Neighborhood (where the housing is located), the city of Boulder, and the state of Colorado. University housing residents also participate in a system of restorative justice that honors each individual person while working toward ethically sound outcomes (RR, SAF-12).

In summary, ethical considerations are inherent to contemplative education, and Naropa has vigorously implemented this value in policies, guidelines, and curricular outcomes. Given the significant number of Adjunct Faculty employed by academic departments, it would be appropriate to consider whether the University provides adequate orientation and training in such matters. As a step in this direction, Academic Affairs holds an orientation session for Adjunct Faculty at the beginning of each semester and has increasingly used this venue to provide employment information and an overview of pressing issues of institutional relevance. Members of the Adjunct Faculty who attended the spring 2009 orientation came to understand the importance of better situating their individual courses in the context of programmatic goals, how to address sensitive topics in the classroom, and the role they can play in identifying “at risk” students. In turn, adjuncts have requested more training on the University’s expectations for contemplative practice, diversity, and the integration of outcomes across courses (RR, AA-1).

Summary and Future Directions

Broadly construed, the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge are fundamental to contemplative education and to its integration with academic and artistic pursuits. Program goals and student learning outcomes across undergraduate and graduate levels demonstrate our curricular commitment to the cultivation of these skills. These learning outcomes relate directly to the values and aims of our institutional mission.

This past decade has been a period of increasing course coverage by Ranked Faculty as well as serial transitions in the undergraduate curriculum. In recent years, we have adopted a more intentional and systematic approach to curricular design, resulting in slower and more data-informed curricular revisions. This thoughtful approach to working with our curriculum benefits from the increasing opportunities for the faculty’s professional development, as well as from sustained faculty engagement with their disciplines and academe more broadly. Unfortunately, during the past ten years, Naropa funding of faculty development has been inconsistent at best, inadequate at worst. Academic Affairs will need to remain vigilant in the preservation of funds for faculty development to boost faculty productivity and evaluation criteria.

A life of learning is a natural outgrowth of the values and practices of contemplative education. However, we have identified three inadequately resourced opportunities for lifelong learning at the University:

1. An institutional culture of faculty mentoring needs to be strengthened. As increasing numbers of faculty with terminal degrees (see Criterion 3) are appointed, the University will need to respond with an appropriate infrastructure. The creation of an Institutional Review Board is one positive step in this regard, as is support for a teaching-learning center.

2. The Allen Ginsberg Library has much ground to cover in moving toward becoming a central hub of learning for the Naropa community. The Strategic Plan calls for the creation of a Student Learning Commons, and it is hoped that the needs of the Library and Writing Center can be integrated into that initiative.

3. The Center for the Advancement of Contemplative Education (CACE) has had a checkered history on campus. With initial funding from the Lenz Foundation, it was able to create the first-year Contemplative Learning Seminar and organize a faculty learning/teaching community to design and deliver the summer Contemplative Pedagogy Seminar. However, plans for the sus-
tainability of CACE were not originally conceived, and Academic Affairs and our new President are now seeking new sources of funding for this important resource.

With regard to the curriculum, we believe that breadth and coherent organization of undergraduate courses have largely been improved in recent years. A commitment to diversity and globalization (specifically around the topic of environmental sustainability) is integral to our undergraduate education. At the same time, the Academic Plan recognizes lacunae in the curriculum and thus establishes a bold vision for strengthening our undergraduate program by adding courses in world language, mathematics, science, and professional studies.

At the graduate level, we consider our master’s programs to provide appropriate breadth and depth in the respective disciplines being taught. The next challenge for these programs is to ensure strong alignment with the six learning outcomes recently articulated by the Academic Plan. A new organizational structure, possibly including the creation of a Dean of Graduate Studies, may assist this process.

Naropa University is well on its way to developing a culture of transparency, collaboration, and planning. Reflection is a natural part of contemplative practice, and this is now firmly complemented by the employment of the Department Systematic Review, the commissioning of market studies, and the consideration of best practices in higher education. Naropa has judiciously added and terminated degree programs as content and market needs have been more clearly identified (or have changed) and as we have assessed our ability to offer these programs with appropriate rigor. As the University endeavors to reach the enrollment and revenue targets of the Strategic Plan, it will be important to make maximal use of these new systems of planning and assessment.
Criterion Five
Engagement and Service

As called for by its mission, the institution identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

A commitment to engagement and service is at the heart of Naropa University. Our Mission Statement calls for nurturing students’ “sense of purpose that accompanies compassionate service to the world” and for providing opportunities for them to “explore inner resources needed to engage courageously with a complex and challenging world [and] to help transform that world through skill and compassion.”

The University has historically identified and developed mutually beneficial relationships with various external constituencies; however, historically the constituent base has been narrow in scope, limited primarily to those with an interest in Buddhism. Ironically, our strongest reputation lies outside our immediate environs. Until recently, the University’s image and recognition in Boulder have been limited by mixed understanding and misconception. As a result, the University has had to dispel outdated and erroneous perceptions and work toward greater clarity and intentionality in relationship-building with external groups. Recognition of Naropa beyond Boulder, regionally and nationally, has reflected greater interest in, understanding, and appreciation of our mission and multiple educational offerings.

During the past several years, Naropa University has formally engaged internal and external constituencies in various processes of institutional data gathering and planning that have strengthened relationships, increased inclusion, and built more effective reciprocity. These efforts have led to better institutional practices of collective inquiry, learning, and reciprocal valuing. As the new President, Dr. Stuart Lord brings leadership with a strong emphasis on engagement and service, and the University anticipates developing stronger community relationships as a primary goal and an area of future institutional growth.

CORE COMPONENT 5A – The institution learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.

Naropa defines its internal constituencies to include the following: matriculated and prospective students; faculty and staff; alumni; parents, guardians, and fami-
lies; and donors and prospective donors. Our external constituencies exist within various local, national, and international communities and include the municipalities situated in the Boulder/Denver metropolitan area, the higher education community, and professionals in a variety of fields.

Students and Prospective Students

The University’s mission identifies students as our primary internal constituency and therefore orient institutional reflections and research to monitor and learn from them. Through quantitative and qualitative means, student input is sought to inform and strengthen educational experiences, social experiences, and residential life. All academic and administrative departments seek to learn from current and prospective students in order to enhance educational services that meet our mission and student needs.

The Office of Admissions coordinates early efforts to track student information from the point of a prospective student’s initial inquiry to the point of actual matriculation. The Naropa website provides analysis of site visitor inquiries, and the information is shared with administrative departments and senior managers. As the Office of Marketing and Communications has assisted Academic Affairs and Admissions in implementing the Enrollment Management Plan, adjustments have been made to our marketing plan as a result of greater awareness of the types, subject areas, and titles of programs relevant to what potential Naropa students are seeking.

The Admissions staff makes recruiting decisions, plans recruiting events, and feeds data about prospective students’ educational interests and requests to academic departments via information gathered from campus visitation and event surveys, as well as the Admitted Student Questionnaire (RR, SAS-22). Also, Admissions trains five to seven Student Ambassadors to speak to prospective students and other visitors through conversation, tours, and other interactions. In turn, Student Ambassadors gather information on behalf of Admissions. The Department Systematic Review process regularly makes use of both formal and informal admissions and marketing data generated by the Office of Admissions. This allows academic departments to consider external data while reviewing program focus, curriculum, and outcomes assessment. For example, the Enrollment Management Plan targets the MA in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology for growth by noting that many inquiries are received by Admissions for a part-time program accessible to working adults (RR, AA-36).

Once admitted students arrive on campus, the Office of Student Administrative Services gathers data using common higher education research instruments, such as the Cooperative Institutional Research Project (CIRP) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The University also administers an institution-specific instrument, the Naropa Student Satisfaction Survey (NSSS), to gather data from undergraduate and graduate students in both on-campus and low-residency programs, as well as from students who withdraw from the University. The survey gathers information about students’ curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular experiences, and several bodies (e.g., the President, Senior Staff, Admissions, Student Affairs, and Marketing and Communications) analyze the data to learn about students’ experiences in order to plan and evaluate the broad directions of the University (RR, SAS-8–20). The use of the CIRP, NSSE, and NSSS data for planning and other purposes is evidenced in the discussions in Criteria 1, 3, and 4.

In addition to these centralized methods, several offices and departments gather data to understand and improve their individual services and functions. For instance, Academic Affairs distributes course evaluations at the end of each semester, and some academic departments conduct end-of-semester interviews, thesis/internship interviews, and/or graduation interviews. In addition, it is not unusual for a department to focus on community-building and perspective-gathering with students within a major using focus groups, department meetings, and experiential retreats. For example, the Department of Environmental Studies includes peer-elected BA and MA students in its monthly department meetings, inviting feedback on the programs and encouraging communication with other students. The Department of Contemplative Psychotherapy has a Student Advisory Feedback Committee that consists of two students from each of the three annual cohorts; the committee meets every two weeks with academic advisers to discuss courses and raise concerns from the respective cohorts. Finally, the Department of Somatic Counseling Psychology has instituted a Student Advisory Council, with representatives from each of its three annual cohorts. Representatives meet twice each semester with the Departmental Leadership Team to present gathered comments, questions, issues, and appreciations from their peers. The students and faculty work together on potential solutions or improvements as needed.
The Office of Student Affairs gathers information on its services through formal intake processes in its various subunits: the Counseling Center, Disability Services, Career Services, and Residence Life. Collaborating closely with the Office of Undergraduate Advising, a mid-semester feedback form is administered by Student Affairs to all faculty as an early alert for students’ academic, emotional, and financial distress. Intervention services are then provided to the identified students (RR, SAF-5). The Dean of Students attempts to meet with all students who intend to withdraw from the University. The goal of this outreach is to uncover student concerns with their Naropa education and experience and to determine their future plans. Unfortunately, many students withdraw from the University after the semester has ended; others do so simply by not registering for the next semester. As a result, information on student withdrawals is not as robust as the institution would like. It is hoped that the new Retention Initiative (see Criterion 2), including stronger collaboration between Student Affairs and Undergraduate Advising, may help with this data-collection problem.

In general, Student Affairs relies heavily on informal and anecdotal feedback that results from the relationships that staff members develop with students as well as an internal incident review process that takes place via discussions and conversations held at weekly staff meetings. Outreach to students, faculty, and staff in Academic Affairs often results from this informal information sharing. Still, the Office of Student Affairs recognizes the need for a more systematic method of data collection and analysis, and it is in the early stages of developing a comprehensive assessment framework (RR, SAF-32).

Student government organizations provide opportunities for Student Affairs and other offices to learn from students. The Student Union of Naropa (SUN) addresses the needs of students by linking the student body with other structures within the University. SUN is composed of two student subgroups:

- **Student Life Programming council (SLP)** distributes funds to student activity groups and sponsors social, educational, diversity, volunteer, and activist programming. The Dean of Students regularly meets with student activity groups to offer more opportunity for information and resource sharing with the University.

- **United Naropa (UN)** creates links between students and both management and governance bodies of the University through student representation and membership on the latter. UN assigns a nonvoting member to Cauldron (the faculty executive committee), as well as to several of the other faculty governance committees. Such presence on these committees builds relationships with faculty and staff, creates a shared sense of community, and generates support and action items to address the concerns and interests of Naropa students (RR, SUN-2).

Students are involved in University governance in other important ways. The Board of Trustees includes one student representative nominated by the UN; this person is a full voting member of the Board and provides an active communication link between the Board and students. Students were actively involved in both phases of strategic planning from 2007 to 2008 and currently serve on the University Budget Committee.

In brief, the University highly values the information and perspective available from students and actively builds mechanisms to encourage student involvement and to solicit student input. However, the need for a more systematic means of communicating with students, especially those at risk of leaving the University, is recognized. In addition, even though the University strives to include student representation on standing committees and ad hoc task forces, this has sometimes been difficult to achieve. The institutional interest in involving students is not always matched by the availability of students to serve on committees. The self-study has identified this as an area for improvement (RR, SUN-15).

**Faculty and Staff**

Naropa understands the importance of listening to faculty and staff and uses a variety of means to gain their perspective and feedback in order to make informed decisions. Our most recent efforts to learn from faculty and staff include the review and distribution of meeting minutes from deliberations of various groups and committees; the administration of focused surveys; and the providing of opportunities for active involvement in major university-wide initiatives, such as strategic planning.

Naropa staff members have consistently expressed dissatisfaction with, and concern over, their apparent lack of inclusion in many of the decision-making bodies of the University. Consistency of communication to and from staff is also noted as a problem. In previous years, staff dissatisfaction led to high turnover, a culture of anxiety, and reactive behavior. As President Coburn took office in 2003 and became aware of these difficulties, he initiated efforts to strengthen communication, clarify decision-making and governance structures, and promote community building.

Recognizing the need for a trusted, neutral, and nonpolitical body, the President also created the Elders Council in 2005 (RR, PR-10 and 11). The Council
meets regularly with the President, serves as a pulse-taker for the institution, and assists in working through complex issues and tensions on campus. The Elders Council sits outside our formal governance structure. It is not intended to address policy questions, nor does it vote on or refer issues to other governance or administrative bodies. The Council provides a neutral, confidential, and safe space for listening and community inquiry. The Elders Council has played an important public role for the institution, for example, by hosting numerous listening circles during the past four years. President Lord has indicated his intention to maintain the Elders Council; he also logged nearly 500 individual and group appointments in his first 6 months in order to listen to concerns of faculty, staff, and students. The President has shared summaries of his listening circles with Academic Council, Cauldron, and during his fall 2009 State of the University address. Listening circles are scheduled throughout the spring 2010 semester to maintain lines of communication on many topics. These listening circles promise to be useful as the University develops the FY 2010–2011 budget.

Naropa includes both faculty and staff on university-wide standing committees and task forces. Committee work is an essential part of our organizational life and a means by which information is shared and decisions are made. The formal governance and advisory process includes Academic Council, Cauldron, and Chairs Council, which represent the interests and perspectives of faculty members; and Staff Executive Committee, which surfaces concerns and conveys information regarding nonteaching staff. Staff members in particular areas have formed their own groups, such as the Council of Academic Administrators (COAA) and the Graduate Academic Advisory Board (GAAB). Both COAA and GAAB are self-organizing groups dedicated to providing a forum for sharing ideas and expertise. They meet on an occasional basis with various senior and mid-level managers to discuss areas of mutual concern. Finally, the University Budget Committee (UBC) was established to ensure that faculty, staff, and students jointly consider annual budget proposals emanating from the University’s multiple operational units. Representatives from these three constituencies sit on the UBC.

Given the importance of our recent strategic planning processes, we note that both faculty and staff played central roles in strategic planning. During the first phase of strategic planning, a kickoff meeting was held that solicited initial ideas from faculty and staff. Subsequent focus groups collected perspectives from staff members at various levels of the institution. More than 80 faculty, staff, and students participated in 11 grassroots Action Groups intended to examine critical issues affecting the University and propose solutions. Action Groups A, B, and C were of particular importance in regard to listening to and learning from faculty and staff (eropa.naropa.edu/staff/strategic/ElevenStrategicPlanningActionCommittees.asp):

- Action Group A was dedicated to the task of reviewing faculty and staff compensation and the recruitment of a diverse workforce;
- Action Group B was dedicated to the task of clarifying the different levels of decision-making at the University and developing leadership opportunities for staff;
- Action Group C was dedicated to the task of reviewing staff and faculty satisfaction, fulfillment, and accountability, including the possible role of professional development systems, conflict-resolution systems, and performance review processes in building a more sustainable work environment.

Although the second phase of strategic planning employed a different framework, concentrating primarily on higher-order financial models to ensure the University’s sustainability, the information from various Action Groups continued to shape the process. Action Group A developed a philosophy to guide decisions about faculty and staff compensation, and the Director of Human Resources, who served on that group, is responsible for keeping data on benchmark institutions’ salaries (RR, SP-10 and 11). Similarly, some recent efforts to renovate existing spaces, such as the student lounge, resulted from Action Group C’s input about the need for community-building (RR, SP-12).

Finally, targeted surveys are occasionally used to gauge faculty and staff interest and concern for various matters. For example, in 2006, the Staff Executive Council developed a document titled “Toward a Sustainable Work Culture,” which was based on focus groups, individual interviews, and a survey (RR, OTH-11). The document articulated key staff concerns and recommendations toward improving the work culture at Naropa and provided important background information during the strategic planning process. In 2005, the Office of Information Technology conducted a survey on the status and needs of academic technology (RR, IT-2); it is currently being used by the Technology Advisory Committee to shape recommendations for a technology consultant. More recently, the Office of Academic Affairs administered a survey to faculty designed to identify desired professional development opportunities and obstacles to pursuing them (RR, AA-57).

A few additional surveys of faculty and staff occur regularly. The Office of Human Resources conducts two surveys that inform decisions on faculty and staff
training and support. These include an annual survey sent to all employees and a Human Resources Exit Survey (RR, HR-15). Aside from these surveys, virtually all data from faculty and staff are collected in the context of other functions or on a one-time, as-needed basis. More consistent data collection would allow the University to establish trends in faculty and staff satisfaction, retention, and other work-related issues, and it would provide a more thorough means of listening to and incorporating faculty and staff feedback.

Alumni

Naropa recognizes the importance of alumni, both as a constituency whose interests and needs are important to know, and as continuing members of the institutional community. The Strategic Plan calls for strengthening our outreach to and relations with alumni (RR, SP-9). Specific action steps derived from the Strategic Plan call for the University to “implement a plan to build and reestablish trust between Naropa and its alumni body through communication, inquiry, value-adding services, and community-building” (RR, SP-2, Action Step III.c). Similarly, the Strategic Plan commissions a “survey to collect and leverage alumni outcome information [and] to enhance understanding of the impact of a Naropa education” (RR, SP-2, Action Step IV.f.v).

Both actions result from the University’s recognition that it has not maintained consistent and transparent relations with its alumni. Unfortunately, inconsistent funding and staffing instability for several years have left Naropa’s alumni relations weak. This has begun to turn around modestly in the last year. Recent investments include the hiring of an Alumni Relations Officer with significant previous experience in this area and an Admissions Counselor who is charged with building alumni support for prospective student recruitment as well as meeting with and informally advising prospective students. In addition, President Lord’s listening circles have been extended to include alumni, and he and the Alumni Relations Officer have begun holding receptions in key areas around the country with concentrated numbers of Naropa alumni (RR, ADV-17). It is hoped that these listening circles and social gatherings, along with a directed survey and other efforts, will provide an effective means for Naropa to solicit and gather input from alumni. As the Criterion 3 chapter has indicated, a more formal study on the long-term impact of Naropa’s contemplative education on graduates is desired by Academic Affairs, Admissions, and Marketing and Communications; as a mid-level priority, this is an item for which we periodically seek external funding (RR, ADV-25). In addition, the Office of Advancement prioritizes stronger alumni relations in its Advancement Action Plan and Advancement Strategic Plan (RR, ADV-28).

Parents, Guardians, and Families

The University learns from students’ parents, guardians, and families through several means. During New Student Orientation, the University invites family members to participate in a number of programs, including the President’s Parent Tea, Snow Lion Residence Hall Orientation, the Welcome Session, and a session introducing contemplative practice. Qualitative feedback is generated from these meet-and-greet events; the Office of the President, various members of Senior Staff (including the Vice President for Academic Affairs), and the Dean of Students engage in conversations with students and their families and integrate this informal feedback into future event planning. Throughout the academic year, the Dean of Students invites parents, guardians, and families to contact him or the Office of Student Affairs. The President sends a communiqué letter to all constituencies, including parents and families, when institutional matters of concern arise, at the conclusion of each academic year, and over the summer.

Donors and Prospective Donors

The University maintains regular contact with current and prospective donors through the mailing of the Naropa! Magazine and occasional e-mail messages from the President. During the first phase of the strategic planning process, representatives of the local community, some of whom were donors, participated in a focus group led by our consultant. The Office of Advancement is currently setting an agenda with the President to visit community leaders, businesspeople, and politicians to better understand perceptions of the University and to set the stage for a major marketing and fund-raising campaign in the next few years. In addition, “Horizon” events, introductory meetings for current and potential stakeholders in the institution, are scheduled for spring 2010. The goal of these meetings is to introduce our new President and his agenda to this important external constituency, hear their concerns and interests with the University, and acquaint them with the University’s new Academic Plan.
Given the complexity of even a small university, it is not surprising that no single or centralized mechanism exists for tapping into community expectations and information. Information and feedback that Naropa receives from external constituencies is requested by or transmitted to individual departments based on specific needs. In most cases, members of Senior Staff share this information at their weekly meeting.

Nevertheless, the University attempts to maintain good working relations with its neighbors. A staff position in the Office of Marketing and Communications is devoted to public relations. This person regularly sends press releases and seeks opportunities to inform the local community about Naropa. Occasionally, the Vice President for Operations attends meetings of the Goss-Grove Neighborhood Association, especially as in the past when there were initial concerns about our students living in the Snow Lion residential apartment building. The Office of Facilities is regularly in touch with local city and county government officials to discuss building and zoning policies and permits. Internship coordinators maintain close contact with students’ internship sites, thus providing us with a sense of how prepared our students are for professional work. Several internship coordinators and administrative directors in the Graduate School of Psychology liaise with the Mental Health Licensing Section of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies. As a result, over the years we have made adjustments to the curriculum to better prepare students for Colorado licensure.

The University recognizes that localized or decentralized community relations efforts do not serve the cultivation of healthy town-and-gown relations that most college and universities seek to build. Central to our Strategic Plan is developing greater clarity in our marketing and branding and a strengthening of our relationships and engagement with external constituencies.

In conclusion, Naropa University employs a number of formal and informal mechanisms to tap into the needs and perspectives of a variety of internal and external constituencies. We have been reasonably successfully at involving faculty, staff, and students in deliberations around key institutional initiatives, such as the strategic planning process. We have only recently begun a concerted effort to reconnect with alumni, and we recognize that a significant investment in this effort, as well as an alumni outcomes study, will benefit learning outcomes assessment as well as our relationships with our graduates. Local community relations are primarily structured on an as-needed basis, with particular University departments or offices maintaining contact with relevant associations, boards, and groups. Given funding priorities, there are no immediate plans to expand the community relations function within the Office of Marketing and Communications.

Core Component 5B. The institution has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.

Naropa University values service and compassionate action and thus is committed to the identification of and engagement with its constituencies through extended learning situations, service opportunities, and resource-sharing. As the discussion below indicates, whereas some of these programs are effective and sustainable, the University’s review of its capacity has resulted on occasion in decisions to either close or suspend them.

Curriculum, Programs, and Projects

On the curricular level, a number of courses in degree-granting programs require students to complete community-based projects, internships, and action studies. In addition to helping meet our students’ degree requirements, these projects serve to address the community’s needs for the University’s expertise. For example, as part of the undergraduate Core Curriculum, students complete a Civic Engagement Seminar in which they devote a semester to a service learning project that takes them outside the classroom. In one example, a continuing relationship with Whittier Elementary School in Boulder allows Naropa students to apply a public achievement model in projects of their choosing. Initial funding for this initiative came in 2002 from a partnership with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, a national organization that promotes active citizenship and public work.

Several graduate programs provide opportunities for students to serve the local community while learning. In addition to internships and practica in the graduate counseling psychology and Master of Divinity programs, these programs are mutually beneficial to students and to the community. For example, the Naropa Community Art Studio serves approximately 50 people per week including middle-school-age young women, people with developmental disabilities, adults successfully living in the community with mental illness, and adults recovering from head injuries and strokes. The studio provides a safe space for creative expression: it is not a psychotherapeutic setting (RR, AA-62 and 63). The Alaya
Preschool is a Boulder resource begun by students of Naropa's founder, and it has been formally connected to Naropa since the late 1980s. Although operationally independent of Naropa, Alaya is covered by Naropa's non-profit status and receives financial and legal assistance from the University as requested. The preschool serves about sixty families a year; Naropa students, primarily from the Early Childhood Education program, use the school for laboratory experiences, observations, and internships.

The total hours that Naropa students contribute to the region are impressive. A 2004–2005 campus-wide mapping by the Community Studies Center tracked student internship and volunteer hours in the community, reporting 41,000 hours of such work. The recent 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results indicate that Naropa students have participated in more service and volunteer activities while enrolled at the University than students at peer institutions (RR, SAS-26).

Two academic areas exemplify this effort well. Students enrolled in the MA in Environmental Leadership program complete a semester-long leadership internship with a local business, nonprofit, or government agency; they must complete 65 internship hours. Similarly, students in the Graduate School of Psychology’s (GSP) three degree programs complete clinical fieldwork and internship hours in order to meet licensure requirements. In the process of doing so, many work in mental health agencies that serve clients who otherwise would not have access to such professional support. The University is currently monitoring the closure of one such agency, Access Counseling, because of the loss of city funding and is hoping to establish a strong working relationship with its successor. The University had been called upon to assist Access in remaining solvent, a testament to our contributions to low-cost counseling in Boulder County, but we made the determination that it was not financially feasible. In the case of the GSP’s one nonclinical program, the MA in Transpersonal Psychology, students complete an extensive service learning requirement rather than clinical fieldwork; this service learning requirement fulfills many of the same functions of connecting students to their communities through service and of providing needed support to the community.

As noted, in providing applied learning opportunities for its students, the University simultaneously attempts to meet the needs of the region. The Community Studies Center and Office of Student Affairs cohost a Resource Festival each semester (RR, SAF-16). The Resource Festival invites groups from the wider Boulder community to set up information booths and to present their needs for interns, members, and volunteers. This networking event attracts several dozen organizations to campus and is well attended by students. With regard to future developments, it is hoped that academic departments will become more involved in hosting community groups and encouraging students to seek ways of meeting degree requirements with service work. The Strategic Plan calls for developing such curricular learning opportunities, and it is likely that a closer partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs is needed to meet these curricular and outreach aspirations.

Another way in which Naropa demonstrates its capacity to serve the surrounding community occurs through the high-profile events that we provide. These include the following:

1. The Summer Writing Program (SWP), housed within the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, is an annual event that schedules for-credit courses for degree-seeking students; attracts writing students from other institutions to participate in workshops on a noncredit basis; and offers public lectures, readings, and performances. Inspired by the early arts festivals that were one of the central features of the Naropa Institute, the SWP serves as an interactive meeting ground for students, professors, local and nationally reputable writers, and the general public interested in the literary arts. Recognized for its contributions to Boulder’s cultural life, the SWP received a grant in 2007 from the Colorado Department of Tourism to promote its 50th anniversary celebration of Jack Kerouac’s On the Road, whose many chapters include narratives about Denver. The Kerouac Festival resulted in international publicity for Naropa and the SWP, with articles in news venues ranging from CNN to The Washington Post, Le Monde, The Australian, and Pravda.

2. The Wilderness Therapy Symposium (WTS) brings together various constituencies under the umbrella of one of Naropa’s fields of expertise. Clinicians, field instructors, rites of passage guides, administrators, researchers, academicians, and students engaged in wilderness therapy, adventure therapy, experiential education, ecopsychology, and counseling psychology converge in Boulder in mid-September each year for this continuing education program. The Symposium’s keynote lecture is open to the general public for a nominal fee, and a resource room is available for vendors associated with this growing field. The WTS also provides continuing education units for licensed counselors. In fall 2009, more than 150 people from the United States, Canada,
and a number of other countries as far away as South Africa attended the experiential workshops, demonstrations, networking events, and talks.

3. The Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism Grant Program is dedicated to promoting Buddhism and yoga in the American context, and Naropa is, at the moment, the largest grant partner and only university-based grant recipient of the program. The foundation funds both the Frederick P. Lenz Residential Fellowship and the Frederick P. Lenz Distinguished Speaker Series, both focused on Buddhism and its relationship to American culture and values. The former program enables the University to support independent scholars, artists, social activists, community leaders, and university faculty in a semester-long residency, during which they complete a project of their choosing, audit Naropa classes, and consult with a faculty mentor. In the past two years, this program has attracted a dissertation-level student from the California Institute of Integral Studies and faculty from Loyola University–Chicago, the National University of Singapore, and St. Lawrence University (RR, ADV-13). The Distinguished Speaker program invites a well-known Buddhist activist, practitioner, or teacher to campus for a three-day period of classroom guest lecturing, faculty development talks, and informal advising with students. In addition, a free public lecture is made available to the Boulder community.

Within the constraints of its limited funding, Naropa endeavors to make a decisive contribution to our region and participates in partnerships and collaboration with area organizations. One example is a two-day series of workshops and public talks called “The Promise and Poignancy of Diversity in the 21st Century,” held in fall 2009. Led by two renowned diversity speakers and consultants, the series was cohosted and cosponsored by Naropa University; the City of Boulder’s Public Library Outreach Office; and the University of Colorado’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement. As another example, twice in the past eighteen months, the University’s Allen Ginsberg Library has cosponsored a panel on entrepreneurship with the Boulder Public Library that was open to the general public. Also noteworthy, the Offices of Academic Affairs and the President sponsored a keynote addresses for the January 2009 conference, “Media, Spiritualities, and Social Change,” hosted by the Center for Media, Religion, and Culture at the University of Colorado. (The University website contains a transcript of this and other public talks sponsored by Academic Affairs at naropa.edu/academicaffairs/scholars.cfm.)

Finally, the changing role of continuing education at Naropa should be acknowledged. As Criterion 2 has noted, Naropa’s School of Extended Studies re-duced its array of program offerings in January 2009. In part, this decision was based on the failure of program revenues to keep pace with staffing costs, resulting in significant deficits during a five-year period. In addition, the decision stemmed from an informal market analysis of competing programs in the Boulder/Denver metropolitan area. This analysis showed that many retreat centers and spiritual teachers provide personal enrichment programs comparable to Naropa’s offerings, whereas our professional development programs are unique and valued by the community. As a result, Extended Studies now focuses on the following three professional certificates to both a local and national student base: Authentic Leadership; Contemplative End-of-Life Care (in partnership with Rigpa, an international spiritual and medical care community); and the aforementioned Wilderness Therapy Symposium. Academic Affairs is also in the process of soliciting ideas for new Extended Studies programming and commissioned a market study in fall 2008 to inform our thinking about community needs (RR, AA-42).

Beyond programs and projects, Naropa’s capacity and commitment to be of service to external constituencies can be seen in the resources we make available—both physical and human—to the wider community.

Naropa provides access to its physical facilities to both individuals and organizations on a sliding-scale model based on whether the sponsoring group is for- or nonprofit. The Nalanda Events Center, the Performing Arts Center, and Shambhala Hall are highly sought-after spaces for concerts, lectures, panel discussions, performances, and religious services. Within the past three years, Naropa has rented or provided space to many organizations and groups, including the Allied Jewish Center of Denver, the American Indian Law Program at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Dharma Ocean, Hakomi Institute, Boulder County Arts Alliances, Congregation Bonai Shalom, and Core Power Yoga.

Faculty and staff are also encouraged to provide service and to engage with external communities. In the case of faculty, community and discipline-based service is a criterion for status and promotion review. For staff, supervisors are encouraged to accommodate reasonable time spent by staff representing the University at outside community and professional meetings. Indeed, as part of the inauguration of President Stuart Lord, Naropa sponsored a “Day of Service and Learning,” which attracted 250 members of the Naropa community to provide service to 20 community organizations (see naropa.edu/inauguration/dayofservice.html).
Specific examples of faculty and staff contributions to various external constituencies include the following:

1. Three members of the Naropa faculty (Dale Asrael, Gaylon Ferguson, and Judith Simmer-Brown) serve as Acharyas, or senior teachers, for Shambhala International. Another faculty member (Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen) regularly teaches for the Nitharta Institute.

2. The cochair of the Department of Contemplative Education, Deb Young, serves on the Board of the Americas Association for the Care of Children, a nonprofit international organization whose mission is to promote support for those who are involved in early childhood care and education through educational programs, citizen exchanges, and resource assistance. As part of this work, Dr. Young includes a service component in her EDU352 Poverty Matters course, where students visit Nicaragua and assist in community education and the building of a community school.

3. At the invitation of the United States Department of State, the founding chair of the Department of Peace Studies, Sudarshan Kapur, participated in the 50th anniversary commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.’s pilgrimage to India. He contributed a month-long lecture series across the subcontinent on the links between the Indian Independence Movement led by Mohandas Gandhi and the mid-twentieth-century African American Civil Rights Movement led by King.

4. The Dean of Admissions, Susan Boyle, serves on the Board of the Rocky Mountain Association for College Admissions Counselors in the role of president-elect. She is also a scholarship application reviewer for the Daniels Fund and an education grants reviewer for the Boulder Community Foundation.

5. In 2008, Vice President for Academic Affairs Stuart Sigman and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Suzanne Benally presented a paper to the Higher Learning Commission on the Department Systematic Review process (RR, AA-52). The paper and supporting documents have subsequently been downloaded by more than 50 Chief Academic Officers affiliated with the Council of Independent Colleges through a dedicated Naropa website (naropa.edu/extend/event10.cfm).

6. Numerous faculty members are involved in leadership positions in their fields, including professional organizations, service on journal editorial boards, and consulting. (See Criterion 4 for discussions of faculty members’ involvements in their fields, including leadership positions in professional organizations.) Even though these activities contribute to a life of learning, we also consider them examples of engagement and service.

We also embody our commitment to engagement with the world through our sustainable environmental practices. We work to reduce our impact on the environment. This serves as a model in the local and academic communities as well as having a direct benefit on natural resources. Our recent environmental sustainability initiatives include signing the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, using 100% wind power, becoming a zero-waste campus, ecological landscaping, improving recycling and composting on campus, promoting alternative transportation, maintaining a fleet of bicycles for free use by students, and building the William D. Jones Community Greenhouse for training and demonstrations.

In summary, Naropa University’s view of contemplative education interweaves personal reflection with social and environmental engagement. Indeed, from the perspective of our Mission Statement, the two are inherently related. This value is reinforced by our commitment to designing educational programs and services that bring degree-seeking students into learning contexts outside the formal classroom, and that offer our unique curriculum to individuals seeking continuing education and professional development. Such a value also supports our faculty and staff in assisting and working on behalf of various external bodies.

These various efforts indicate that Naropa’s capacity for engagement is commensurate with its values and commitments. At the same time, the discussion above also acknowledges that the University must be prudent in selecting particular means and opportunities to be of service to the world. Although we are often called upon to enter into collaborations and partnerships with other organizations, we also recognize that we must balance fiscal responsibility with our aspirations to be of service.

CORE COMPONENT 5C – The institution demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.

Our commitment and capacity to engage with various constituencies is supported by our institutional ability to listen and respond to their views. Many of the programs and initiatives described earlier in this chapter derive and periodically seek input from the constituencies who depend upon the University for services. In this section, we consider multiple ways in which Naropa has responded to the growing interest in our artistic, intellectual, and educational assets.
A story is told, perhaps apocryphal, that in the mid-1980s as faculty and administrators wrestled with Naropa’s initial application for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission, a term was sought to capture what was then believed to be a unique model of education. The term “contemplative education” was thus coined. During the years, the concept has increasingly entered academic discourse, and today organizations and programs now exist that recognize Naropa’s role in this field. Naropa welcomes these developments, at the same time that it continues to seek a leadership role in responding to the conversation about transformative and holistic education. Former President Coburn took great strides to successfully advocate Naropa’s special approach to education within the landscape of higher education by attending professional meetings, joining relevant organizations, accepting speaking engagements, and encouraging others at the University to do the same. Thus, Naropa has responded with training projects, publications, and conference and workshop presentations to expand and deepen the national conversation about contemplative approaches to higher education.

In 2007, Dr. Coburn and a group of faculty and staff accepted an invitation from the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) to present a demonstration panel on contemplative approaches to diversity work. Several faculty members were invited to contribute to CIIS’s 2009 conference, “Expanding the Circle: Creating an Inclusive Environment in Higher Education for LGBTQ Students and Studies,” but had to decline because of scheduling conflicts. In 2008, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and former Faculty Director of the Center for Contemplative Education was asked by the Lenz Foundation to assess the educators’ retreat sponsored by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society conference in Amherst, MA. Also in 2008, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education and Vice President for Academic Affairs were hosted by Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health to discuss entering into an articulation and transfer agreement for students in their one-year college “bridge” program affiliated with Lesley University in Cambridge, MA. Although Naropa eventually decided not to pursue this opportunity, it demonstrates our willingness to hear from others about our programming and to consider mutually beneficial partnerships.

Such is the case with the articulation agreements we have struck with the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU). That department is unable to meet the needs of its graduate students for advanced instruction in Sanskrit and Tibetan, two world languages that are specialties of Naropa’s Department of Religious Studies. The agreement allows CU students to fulfill degree requirements with coursework at Naropa.

A burgeoning relationship is forming at the request of Centered Life, an equine therapy program located near Colorado Springs, which has hosted Naropa’s Master of Divinity interns in the past. Centered Life and Naropa are jointly proposing a Clinical Pastoral Education module on contemplative caregiving to the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, a national organization that supports the work of chaplains and pastoral counselors. If approved, this collaboration would include a residential and online program for chaplains and pastoral counselors throughout the United States.

The Naropa University Archive Project represents another response to community calls for action and engagement. In its 35-year history, Naropa has amassed a large and unique collection of audio materials, including readings and performances by some of the country’s most distinguished essayists, fiction writers, performance artists, and poets. Approximately six years ago, both internal and external constituencies became concerned that these tape recordings were beginning to decay and urged the University to digitize and catalog its treasured holdings. Significant grant support has made it possible for Naropa to organize, preserve, and disseminate these materials of enduring value related to a significant genre of American literary arts. One grant initiative designed curriculum materials for middle and high school teachers of English that could be accessed via the Internet. The Archive Project thus fosters collaboration with our constituencies by encouraging the use of its holdings, publicizing the collections, and providing information services related to them, while preserving the materials safely according to current archival standards (naropa.edu/archive/index.cfm).

The Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), a secular institution attempting to balance that country’s Buddhist heritage with a push to modernization, approached Naropa in early 2009 to forge an interinstitutional partnership. RUB is interested in ways that contemplative practice can be incorporated into the training of mental health workers and teachers. Several faculty members have been invited to Bhutan to consult on an initial curriculum project. At present, Naropa is weighing its ability to respond fully to RUB’s request and is exploring the possibility of seeking third-party sponsorship for this initiative.

In our view, Naropa University has developed an enviable record in a number of fields—contemplative education most certainly, but also in diversity work, counseling psychology, wilderness therapy, and the literary arts. As external parties approach Naropa, we have learned to listen and consider invitations to collaborate or contribute to initiatives beyond our campus. In this regard, the Strategic Plan calls for asserting our leadership role in contemplative education, though we have not as yet established a mechanism for selecting particular external constitu-
Criterion Five

Engagement and Service

Encounters that best serve the needs of the University and that would most benefit from a long-term relationship with us. As the University develops its capacity to respond to its external constituencies, it is likely that we will create means of soliciting and enhancing our response to the needs of current and potential constituencies. Certainly, this is an agenda for our new President, whose inaugural address articulates the special contribution Naropa can make: “[O]ur distinctive educational approach requires that we develop habits of leadership and service simultaneously. It requires that we not only instruct students in how to live a life of service, but we must model this behavior” (RR, PR-12, p. 4).

CORE COMPONENT 5D – Internal and external constituencies value the services the institution provides.

In the 2000 self-study, Naropa University amassed evidence of a high level of commitment and respect from our constituencies; on balance, we believe that this is still the case today. The discussion above of the other core components of Criterion 5 suggests ways in which Naropa is sought out by individuals and organizations. The discussion below offers a somewhat more nuanced view of this issue, for just as we recognize the praise that the University receives from many quarters, we must also attend to the meaning behind our undergraduate retention rate and a reputation that is sometimes better nationally than “at home.”

Throughout this self-study document, we have presented evidence of the overall strength of our reputation with students. Naropa is the first-choice institution for a majority of undergraduates planning to attend; in many cases, we are also the only college or university to which they apply for admission. This indicates a high level of commitment and value accorded Naropa by this constituency (RR, SAS-18). Similarly, student satisfaction with their education and experience at Naropa is generally high (RR, SAS-8 and 9).

At the same time, the University’s undergraduate attrition rate calls for a closer investigation of students’ valuing of the institution (see Criterion 2). Building on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Retention, we have recently begun a significant Retention Initiative in an attempt to identify and provide services for students at risk of leaving the University prematurely and to establish a clear research database on student explanations upon exit. Because of the small numbers of students who leave each year—small from a statistical perspective, not in terms of the impact on University operations or finances—we are not confident that we fully understand the major causes of student attrition at Naropa. We recognize that, in some cases, contemplative education may expose emotional wounds that young students are not able or willing to experience. Still, the Academic Plan is built on an assumption that, whatever might be happening for students emotionally, the institution’s undergraduate curriculum and advising services can be made more robust in order to enhance our value to students and their families.

When we turn attention to Boulder and surrounding areas, we equally acknowledge the multifaceted valuation of Naropa among these external constituencies. Members of local academic, artistic, spiritual and religious, and professional communities express their positive regard for Naropa in a number of ways, such as attendance at theater productions, musical performances, and art exhibits; participation in our signature events, such as the Summer Writing Program, Lenz Distinguished Speaker Series, and Wilderness Therapy Symposium; and hosting of practicum students, interns, and service learning projects.

In recent years, the University has also been vexed by some local community members, who hold an image of Naropa dating to the time when youthful exuberance and unconventional programming may have characterized our outward-facing appearance. Nonetheless, we contend that that history has given rise to a nationally recognized educational institution, able to attract senior administrators and faculty from some of the nation’s finest liberal arts institutions, and capable of making contributions in its specialized field of contemplative education and across academic disciplines. At the national level, the New York Times Education Life section devoted an entire article about Naropa’s pedagogical model and its resonance elsewhere in American higher education (RR, MC-3). The article is balanced and situates Naropa well in the context of American contemplative education.

Still, mindful that good value is cultivated, the University is taking continuing steps to update its local image. The new President has reached out to the Boulder Chamber of Commerce and other city leaders, and the Office of Marketing and Communications recently created and filled a new position for a public relations manager. The University expects these steps to help update Naropa’s image in the Boulder community and further shape our recognition in higher education.
Naropa University makes use of a number of means of listening to its internal and external constituencies, including some that are unique to the University’s culture, such as the Elders Council and listening circles, as well as those that are more common. Accessing and analyzing a variety of quantitative and qualitative data sources, the University aims to provide responsive programming and resource decisions to serve its various constituencies. Since the last comprehensive self-study, the institution has engaged in a highly participatory and multiyear strategic and academic planning process, which included analysis of our capacity to receive input from both internal and external constituencies and build appropriate responses to their observations and critiques, thus demonstrating our capacity for self-reflection, renewal, and action.

The University acknowledges its mission by assuming a leadership role in the emerging national conversation about contemplative education. We are especially committed to serving as a model that integrates contemplative practice with awareness of diversity and commitment to community service. In this regard, various degree programs expect students to complete applied learning experiences, and both faculty and staff are encouraged to contribute artistic, scholarly, and administrative expertise locally, nationally, and internationally. In turn, a variety of constituencies seek out contributions from and alliances with Naropa.

To some degree, our strengths mask our challenges. Even though the University has a strong culture of reflection and deep listening, it has a less developed means of formal listening and analysis. This challenge calls for the development of a campus-wide information management system that would make it easier for departments, other units, student organizations, and individual faculty and staff members to record, share, and assess information. This is especially the case with regard to the University’s engagement with alumni, an important resource that has not been the object of consistent attention and with student retention.

Resource limitations also constrain our ability to respond to overtures for new partnerships and programming. To take two examples, we must develop a sustainable model for the School of Extended Studies and continue to seek funding for the digitization and publication of the Naropa Archive. Still, Naropa can take comfort in knowing that other groups and institutions are interested in our educational expertise and in assisting us in bringing this to wider and wider circles.
Conclusion and Request for Continuing Accreditation

Naropa University has made deliberate and significant progress in its institutional development since the last accreditation visit in 2000. Despite limited resources and multiple changes in leadership, the past ten years have seen major developments in the University's capacity to self-assess and to plan for the future. Our often informal and intuitive ways of self-reflection are complemented by more formal, explicit, analytic, and evidence-based practices. Taken together, these two approaches allow Naropa to initiate and implement continued improvements, and maintain our momentum toward being “North America’s leading institution of contemplative education.”

During the past eighteen months, the self-study process provided the University community with the opportunity to deeply and thoroughly gather evidence about our functioning. Our analyses show that we:

1. Articulate, express, and act in accordance with our mission;
2. Use our mission to plan for the future and make resource decisions;
3. Teach well and assess student learning outcomes according to our distinct educational view and aspiration;
4. Cultivate a life of learning, inquiry, creative practice, and social responsibility among all members of the University;
5. Manifest a commitment to serve external constituencies and to provide an education that prepares students “both to meet the world as it is and to change it for the better” as called for by our Mission Statement.

The self-study has also identified gaps between our aspirations and our actuality. In those areas, we have described our processes to gather and evaluate data, and develop actions and responses to address those gaps. The self-study process required a major investment of time, attention, and human resources at a moment in its history when the University was also completing its strategic planning, conducting a presidential transition, and beginning a major budget reduction initiative. However, the writers of this self-study report wish to recognize the dedication and commitment of students, staff, administrators, Trustees, faculty, alumni, and members of our external constituencies in facilitating this process and contributing to the corresponding document. The investment in this self-study reflects the desire of all these constituencies to propel our “hundred-year” project into the next decade. It truly has been a collaborative effort to reflect on past concerns, document successes and challenges, and clarify actions and opportunities for future development and improvement.

An additional document will be provided to the Peer Review Team just prior to the March 2010 campus visit. This document will share details on the following emerging initiatives: (1) the results of our new President’s decision to reorganize his senior cabinet and its implications for University’s operations; (2) decisions to allocate the next installment of jump-start funding as part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and (3) progress to produce a permanently balanced budget in 2010-2011 through a reduction or elimination of a structural deficit.

Evidence provided in this report, supporting resources, and materials available onsite confirm that Naropa University has met all of the criteria required for accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. Accordingly, the University respectfully requests continued accreditation, with the next Comprehensive Visit scheduled for 2020.
Federal Compliance

Compliance with all relevant federal regulations and maintaining eligibility to participate in the United States Department of Education’s Federal Student Aid Programs is critical to Naropa University’s ability to fulfill its mission and serve its students. This section presents evidence of the University’s fulfillment of the expectations of the Higher Learning Commission’s federal compliance program.

Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Naropa University is in full compliance with the regulations and guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission regarding credits, program length, and tuition. Naropa University uses a semester-based system and semester credit hours are commensurate with other established accredited institutions of higher education with respect to requirements and semester credit hour equivalencies. The academic year at Naropa University consists of one eight-week summer semester and sixteen-week spring and fall semesters. All courses comply with the standard classroom meeting time of fifteen contact hours per semester credit hour awarded.

Naropa University offers degrees at the bachelor and masters level. All bachelor level degrees require 120 total accumulated credit hours. Undergraduate students must receive a minimum numerical grade equivalent of 2.0 (“C”) in order to be awarded credit for required courses in their major and minor fields of study. Master level degrees vary in the number of credits required per program but range between 36 and 78 credit hours for completion. The credit hour requirements are determined by compliance with best practices in the respective disciplines, accreditation requirements, mission of the department, and state licensure requirements. Graduate students must receive a minimum numerical grade equivalent of 2.7 (“B-”) in order to be awarded credit for a course.

Naropa University’s tuition rates are set by the Board of Trustees on an annual basis based on recommendations from senior-level staff and administration. Tuition rates are evaluated and placed in competitive alignment with other similar accredited institutions. Students at Naropa University are charged a standard tuition per credit hour. Graduate and undergraduate students are charged at a different rate. Full-time undergraduate students taking from 12 to 18 credit hours are charged a block tuition rate.

Student Complaints

Since 2008, Naropa University has defined complaints in this way: “A student complaint occurs when you receive a [written, signed] communication from a student in which registering negative feedback [directed at the institution, institutional policies or processes, or an employee of the institution acting in that capacity] is an intentional, primary purpose.” Treated differently from complaints are requests for decisions and normal appeals following University protocols, as well as grievances directed at other students or the entities or individuals not affiliated with the institution. Complaints made by students and by parents of students, type of complaint, date, and outcome are logged (RR, FED-3).

Naropa has a number of different policies bearing on student complaints. The first, and most important, is published in the Student Handbook and is entitled “Filing a Complaint Against a Faculty or Staff Member.” It also contains information on making complaints about the institution that are not individual-specific in a section entitled “Simple Complaint Process” (RR, HB-1, pp. 40 – 42.) In addition to this policy, it is also worth noting the many other policies giving students the right to make grievances or appeal various decisions or policies. The following policies are described in the 2009–2010 Course Catalog (RR, HB-5):

- Grade Disputes (p. 56)
- Disputing Records (p. 61)
- Financial Aid Suspension Appeal Process (p. 44)
- Exceptions to Academic and Financial Policies (p. 48)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (p. 61)

The following policies are described in the 2009 – 2010 Student Handbook (RR, HB-1):

- Conduct & Conflict (pp. 34 – 42)
- Cultural Appropriation Complaint Resolution Procedure (pp. 47 - 48)
- Reporting Diversity Concerns (p. 13)
- Reporting Dual Relationships (p. 49)
- Reporting Discrimination & Reporting Harassment (p. 50)
- Reporting a Sex Offense (p. 53 – 54)
Other policies and procedures may exist in academic and administrative departments, but the above are the primary policies governing student complaints, appeals and grievances.

The general experience of the personnel identified in these policies is that very few students avail themselves of the opportunity to make a formal written complaint. While students are often hesitant to submit complaints, parents are often the ones to register complaints on behalf of students. In the great majority of cases, initial inquiries or appeals are resolved using standard University policies, and no written complaint occurs. The primary places where written complaints are received by the Office of the President and the Office of Academic Affairs, each of which maintains a student complaint file including, where applicable, a copy of the initial complaint, notes, and other supporting documentation on the process and disposition of the complaint.

Transfer Policies

Naropa University follows transfer credit best practices as outlined by the Higher Learning Commission. Naropa University accepts both graduate and undergraduate transfer credit in several forms, including the following: Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Exams, CLEP scores, DSST scores, DANTES Exams, some military credit, and in the case of undergraduate students, credits earned with a grade of C or above from regionally accredited colleges and universities. Graduate transfer credit is approved on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of each academic department; credits must have been earned at a regionally accredited college or university (international on a case-by-case basis) and within five years of application to Naropa University. Such credits must carry a grade of “B” or better, and no transfer credit is awarded for contemplative practice courses.

The University transfers in a maximum of 60 credit hours for undergraduates, which may only be applied to undergraduate Core Curriculum requirements or electives (i.e., not major requirements). All undergraduate students must complete an additional 60 credits at Naropa in order to be conferred a degree from the University. The University accepts a maximum of 30 vocational credits and a maximum of 30 AP or IB credits. The University transfers in a maximum of 6 credit hours for graduate students.

After evaluation, students are notified of their transfer credit status via their academic advisor and are permitted one semester to make any appeals to their transcript evaluation or submit additional transcripts for transfer credit evaluation. The Office of Admissions and the Office of Student Administrative Services periodically evaluate transfer credit policies and conduct regular staff training sessions regarding transfer credit policies. Individual academic departments providing graduate degree programs also follow the general policy guidelines regarding transfer credit and review and evaluate whether transfer credit will be accepted and applied to the particular degree on a case-by-case basis. Transfer credit policies are clearly articulated and available to the public through the Course Catalog and the Naropa University website.

Verification of Student Identity

Naropa University relies on Pearson eCollege’s Course Management System (CMS) for delivering distance education, including the verification of online student identity. This CMS creates a password-protected environment and features ExamGuard, a custom browser that features locked testing within the CMS. This assessment feature reduces student cheating in online tests. Currently, there are no Naropa University online courses using tests as part of their grading portfolio; therefore, ExamGuard is not being utilized. However, it is ready and available for use should instructors decide to employ tests in their online classes.

In order to remain compliant with the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) provision regarding student identity verification, the University has been closely monitoring Pearson eCollege’s integration of Acxiom—the student verification software which meets the HEOA provision’s standard—with the aim of adopting this technology in the Naropa online campus. This project has not yet been completed, primarily because of the high costs of implementation as well as the corresponding hesitancy of eCollege’s educational partners to go ahead with the project. Recent assessment of the HEOA’s provision by the research and consulting company, Eduventures, also suggests waiting. The University will continue to monitor the development of the Acxiom integration and will make integration decisions based on maintaining compliance as well as financial feasibility.

Title IV Program and Related Responsibilities

1. General Program Responsibilities – Naropa University has consistently complied with all requirements of the Department of Education in relation to the Title IV Program and related responsibilities. Naropa University is not subject to any limitation, suspension, or termination from the Department of Education.
2. Financial Responsibility Requirements – The University’s annual audit includes a full A-133 audit and compliance review. The University has consistently been found to be in compliance with the Department of Education financial responsibility requirements. The Department of Education ratio analysis requires that a school have a minimum composite score of 1.5. Naropa has never fallen below the 1.5 requirement and has consistently been well above it. For the year ending June 30, 2008, our score was 3.36. For June 30, 2009, it was 2.3. The score declined in 2009 primarily due to the losses incurred in our endowment fund. See the Criterion 2 chapter for more information.

3. Student Loan Default Rates – Naropa has a very low student loan default rate. The rates shown in this table were calculated by the Department of Education.

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins</td>
<td>14.06%</td>
<td>31.71%</td>
<td>24.07%</td>
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* These data represent the most current figures. First draft figures for FY08 do not get published until February 2010.

Naropa has done an exemplary job of maintaining low default rates for Stafford loans by supplying extensive financial literacy information to students and by providing in-person exit interviews. The Department of Education expects that the cohort default rate for Federal Stafford/SLS loans made to students for attendance at the University not exceed 25% for the three most recent years. Naropa is in compliance with this standard.

The default rate from our Perkins loans caused us enough concern that we terminated our long standing contract with our Perkins student loan servicing company, Campus Partners, in summer 2009, and entered into an agreement with ECSI to service our Perkins loans. We have a small cohort (ranging from 41 to 64 students over the three years reported above), and we award small amounts to those students receiving Perkins loans. For the 2005-2006 academic year through the 2008-2009 academic year, our average Perkins loan was $645. We anticipate that improved customer service from ECSI, both internally (e.g., improved maintenance of student data) and externally (e.g., increased responsiveness to borrowers), will contribute to reducing our Perkins loan default rate. Our goal, which is consistent with Department of Education recommendations, is to reduce our Perkins loan default rate to less than 15%.


5. Satisfactory Academic Progress and Attendance Policies – Naropa is meeting all program integrity requirements including requirements for satisfactory academic progress and attendance policies as required by the Department of Education. The 2009-2010 Federal Student Aid handbook describes the required components of schools’ satisfactory academic policies. A school’s satisfactory academic policy must include certain basic elements:

- A qualitative component consisting of grades or comparable factors that are measurable against a norm. The Naropa catalog describes the minimum GPA per semester that must be maintained, as well as the minimum number of credits that students must complete each semester, depending on their enrollment status (RR, HB-5, p.43-44, 56).

- A quantitative component that consists of a maximum time frame in which a student must complete his or her educational program, subdivided into increments. Our catalog outlines the maximum time frame for degree completion as well as the minimum number of credits students must complete each semester (RR, HB-5, p. 56-57).

- Measurement of progress at the end of each increment is a standard practice at Naropa. Measurement of satisfactory academic progress happens after the fall and the spring semesters respectively. For financial aid eligibility, satisfactory academic progress is evaluated after the fall, spring, and summer terms. All periods of enrollment are used to evaluate satisfactory academic progress for financial aid eligibility, even periods in which the student did not receive FSA funds.

The Course Catalog also explains the appeal process for academic suspension (page 56) and financial suspension (page 44), how to reestablish satisfactory progress (pages 44, 56), and how course repetitions are handled (page 49).

6. Contractual Relationships – In 2004, Naropa entered into a contractual relationship for the MFA in Theatre (Lecoq Based Actor Created Theatre) with the London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). This degree program is based on a curriculum originally offered at our Boulder campus, and which Naropa requested authorization to the Higher Learning Commission to relocate to London on April 27, 2004. Delivery of the MFA curriculum is an equal collaboration between Naropa and LISPA: Naropa has a full-
time administrator and faculty member assigned to the London teaching site; Naropa regularly reviews the teaching credentials of the LISPA Director and accords him a Ranked Faculty position; all proposed changes to the curriculum must be approved by the University’s Curriculum Committee; and a .25 FTE Administrative Director resides on the Boulder campus, and is available to MFA students to handle financial aid, registration and degree clearance issues – this person also visits London annually to assist with orientation and graduation. Naropa has notified the HLC of the termination of the contractual relationship with LISPA and the planned “teach out” by summer 2010.

Institutional Disclosures and Advertising and Recruitment Materials

The Naropa website contains the Mark of Affiliation and website information (http://www.naropa.edu/about/accreditation.cfm). The 2009-2010 Course Catalog is currently not in compliance with the required language and information, and it will be corrected before its next printing. The University is reviewing all primary printed University publications for references to the University’s HLC accreditation to insure that all references are in compliance. An update about this progress will be sent to the HLC team prior to the site visit in March 2010.

In addition, Naropa University provides readily available and detailed information to current and prospective students and the public about its programs, locations, and policies via its internal and external website; outreach events such as alumni receptions, open houses, and recruiting events; email; and printed material such as the academic Course Catalog, program brochures, handbooks, mailers/letters, and the Naropa Magazine.

Relationship with Other Accrediting Agencies and with State Regulatory Bodies

Naropa University has accreditation approval for two graduate degree programs:

• The Art Therapy concentration in the MA in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology program is accredited by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA). The last request was submitted in January 2005 and included the submission of an annual program report in June 2006, with the AATA reaffirming accreditation for a seven-year period until January 2011 (RR, FED-1).

• The Dance/Movement Therapy concentration of the MA in Somatic Counseling Psychology program is accredited by the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA). The last review and request took place in June 2009 with the ADTA Committee reaffirming the program’s accreditation for six more years until June 2015 (RR, FED-2).

The University has no relationships with state regulatory bodies.

Public Notification of Comprehensive Evaluation Visit and Third Party Comment

Naropa University posted information regarding its accreditation self-study, including a request for comment, on its website (http://www.naropa.edu/about/accreditation.cfm) in August 2009. The University invited third party comment in January 2010 on its website and in the Boulder local newspaper, the Daily Camera.