

PITZER COLLEGE



INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSAL

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

MAY 2006



Our Mission



Pitzer College produces engaged, socially responsible citizens of the world through an academically rigorous, interdisciplinary liberal arts education emphasizing social justice, intercultural understanding and environmental sensitivity. The meaningful participation of students, faculty and staff in college governance and academic program design is a Pitzer core value. Our community thrives within the mutually supportive framework of the Claremont Colleges which provide an unsurpassed breadth of academic, athletic and social opportunities.



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Institutional Context

On February 27, 2005, the Pitzer College Board of Trustees approved a new mission statement: “Pitzer College produces engaged and socially responsible citizens of the world through an academically rigorous, interdisciplinary liberal arts education emphasizing social justice, intercultural understanding and environmental sensitivity.” The meaningful participation of students, faculty, and staff in college governance and academic program design is a Pitzer core value. Our community thrives within the mutually supportive framework of the Claremont Colleges which provide an unsurpassed breadth of academic, athletic, and social opportunities.

The mission statement development process, as well as all key campus decision making and strategic planning, involved students, faculty, staff, alumni, and trustees. The WASC re-accreditation process on campus is also effectively structured to be as inclusive of the community as possible to provide insightful, meaningful, and useful feedback.

Founded in 1963, Pitzer College was named for founder Russell K. Pitzer (1878-1978), and was born out of and in response to the tumultuous times of the 1960's. The College was the first independent women's college created since Bennington in 1932. From the start, Pitzer offered an alternative liberal arts education focused on a deeper understanding of humankind within a structure that allowed every voice to be heard equally and fully. By 1968, the College had 550 students and had matured into a highly respected residential college for women. Pitzer became a co-ed college in 1970 with an initial enrollment of 80 men and 618 women.

Today Pitzer College is a fully coeducational liberal arts college with a strong commitment to the values of a residential educational community. It offers majors in all key fields of the liberal arts with curricular emphasis on the social and behavioral sciences. Its particular strengths lie in the encouragement of independent interdisciplinary work and the development of a critical approach to the traditional disciplines. The Claremont campus consists of 34 acres, with an approximate enrollment of 942 students.

Pitzer is an active member of a unique educational environment known collectively as The Claremont Colleges. Seven educational institutions now constitute The Claremont Colleges: Pomona College, founded in 1887; Claremont Graduate University, 1925; Scripps College, 1926; Claremont McKenna College, 1946; Harvey Mudd College, 1955; Pitzer College, 1963; and the Keck Graduate Institute for Applied Life Sciences, 1997.

The College's curriculum received accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges in 1965. In 1973 Pitzer received a 10-year accreditation from WASC, becoming one of the first colleges to receive long-term accreditation.

The President of the College, Laura Skandera Trombley, Ph.D., is the Chief Executive Officer of Pitzer College. The President's Cabinet includes Alan Jones, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty; James Marchant, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students; Arnaldo Rodriguez, Vice President of Admission and Financial Aid; Anne Moran, Vice President of College Advancement; Vicke Selk, Vice President of Administration and Treasurer; and Susan Andrews, Associate Vice President for Marketing and Public Relations.

Ultimate responsibility for oversight of college operations resides with the Board of Trustees. Forty-two percent of the 33-member Board of Trustees are alumni of the College. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees is Eugene P. Stein and the Vice Chair is John N. Tierney.

Pitzer presents a unique opportunity for meaningful self-exploration and for responsible exploration of the world. The College expects students to take an active role in planning their course of study, to bring a spirit of inquiry and adventure to planning that course of study, and to work hard to meet the intellectual goals of a Pitzer education. The College has six educational objectives to guide students and their advisors.

Breadth of Knowledge. The human experience is the center of a Pitzer education. By exploring broadly programs in the humanities and fine arts, natural sciences and mathematics, and in the social and behavioral sciences, students develop an under-



standing of the nature of human experience—its complexity, its diversity of expression, its continuities and discontinuities over space and time, and the conditions which limit and liberate it.

Understanding in Depth. By studying a particular subject in depth through a major, students develop the ability to make informed, independent judgments.

Critical Thinking, Formal Analysis, and Effective Expression. By comparing and evaluating the ideas of others and by participating in various styles of research, students develop their capacities for critical judgment. By exploring mathematical and other formal systems, students acquire the ability to think in abstract, symbolic ways. By writing and communicating orally, students acquire the ability to express their ideas effectively and to persuade others.

Interdisciplinary Perspective. By integrating the perspectives of several disciplines, students gain an understanding of the powers and limits of each field and of the kind of contribution each can make; students learn how to understand phenomena as a complex whole.

Intercultural Understanding. By learning about their own culture and placing it in comparative perspective, students appreciate their own and other cultures and recognize how their own thoughts and actions are influenced by their culture and history.

Concern with Social Responsibility and the Ethical Implications of Knowledge and Action. By undertaking social responsibility and by examining the ethical implications of knowledge, students learn to evaluate the effects of actions and social policies and to take responsibility for making the world we live in a better place.

In its letter to the College's President after the 1998 reaccreditation self-study process, WASC wrote: "The self study demonstrated the exemplary way in which Pitzer's mission permeates its programs and environment. The self study is also notable for the way in which it provided a clear picture of Pitzer in regard to its educational goals as well as in relation to the Standards of Accreditation. The evaluation team found much to commend in its visit, particularly how Pitzer has developed its distinctive educational objectives so that they form a seamless whole."

The WASC letter also called attention to several areas in need of further attention, specifically the

need for the College to gain increased insight on factors leading to low retention and to develop strategies to address attrition; to bolster its periodic program reviews and link them to student learning and assessment; and to examine the role of mathematics and science in Pitzer students' education. In addition, a good number of the recommendations in the 1998 WASC Report from the evaluation team focused on assessment and the need for systematic institutional research and data collection in the formation of a culture of evidence.

With this in mind, the College created and staffed an Office of Institutional Research which has developed and instituted a series of surveys, studies, and data collecting procedures that are now conducted on an annual basis. In addition, the College has approved a comprehensive Program and Field Group Review process, begun the construction of new residential halls designed to improve the link between the academic and residential lives of students, and has started discussions focused on innovative ways to enhance the College's intercultural and social responsibility educational objectives through an emphasis on global and local connections. In the past few years, the College has also created three new faculty positions with plans to add three additional ones with the intention of enhancing student/faculty educational experiences and improving our student/faculty ratio. These developments extend Pitzer's core values in new and exciting ways; bolster our commitment to providing challenging student learning experiences; are intended to improve student selectivity, retention, and graduation rates; and are the central focus of our re-accreditation process.



Preliminary Self-Review

Over the past four years, Pitzer College has engaged in three major initiatives that resulted in extensive reviews of our educational mission, priorities, and goals.

(1) Hewlett Foundation Habits of the Mind Grant. Beginning in the fall semester 2001 and continuing through the summer 2003, 32 faculty members met in five cross-disciplinary groups sponsored by a grant from the Hewlett Foundation to discuss conditions that foster intellectually positive “habits of the mind,” to share ideas about pedagogy, reviewed the educational objectives of the College, and made recommendations about programs and needed resources. Three recurrent themes emerged from these discussion groups:

- Engagement with some of our educational objectives (intercultural understanding, social responsibility, interdisciplinary learning) was not as meaningful as we felt it should be. While most faculty affirmed the centrality of these goals, there was widespread concern that the methods to achieve them were inconsistent, not complete, or had become routinized in ways that undercut meaningful engagement with them.

- There is substantial personal and professional value in sharing with each other various teaching tips, pedagogies, syllabi, and related common issues of course development and teaching. Faculty would welcome more discussion opportunities and formal programs focused on pedagogy, advising, and the dissemination of ideas about course development.

- Programs should be established that provide students structured opportunities to communicate publicly what they are doing to meet the educational objectives, to demonstrate their knowledge and research skills, and to share their experiences in internships and related co-curricular experiential learning settings. The creation of a portfolio tool to monitor changes over time in these areas could serve as an excellent method of assessment and self-evaluation for these objectives. In addition, the College might develop some intentional and creative ways of linking institutional academic goals with the residential life of students.

(2) Irvine Foundation Campus Diversity Initiative. From January 2002 to June 2005, Pitzer participated in the Campus Diversity Initiative (CDI) with a grant from the Irvine Foundation. Through workshops, seminars, and other related activities, faculty, students, and staff discussed issues of diversity and how best to seamlessly incorporate them into the practices, pedagogy, and philosophy of the College. There has been a notable growth in the amount and quality of conversation about issues of diversity during the grant period, including strong attendance at seminars, talks and trainings; faculty retreats and workshops with diversity components; and college-wide conversations about curricular interests related to diversity, including community-based learning and the educational objectives for social responsibility and intercultural and interdisciplinary understanding. Several outcomes resulted from the CDI discussions:

- The faculty reaffirmed our Educational Objectives, in particular ones related to intercultural understanding and social responsibility, and discussed ways to more successfully implement them, possibly through the creation of a portfolio system. In addition, the College seeks to enhance educational practices through strategic partnerships with service organizations in diverse communities in our local region, and with External Studies and international exchanges globally.

- The Pitzer community realizes that there is no quick fix to the social, historical, and institutional practices and legacies of oppression. Thus, we have committed to explore the creation of a teaching and learning program that will coordinate ongoing training, conversation, and research about various pedagogical issues including those related to diversity.

- The College has created an Office of Institutional Research to assist in (a) development of benchmarks related to diversity, (b) the measurement of attitudes about diversity and social responsibility, and (c) the monitoring of activities that contribute to the diversity of our community. It has made a commitment to sustain the collection of data relevant to diversity and social responsibility issues by creating a budget for the Office and making it a part of the organizational structure of the



College. In addition, reports produced by the Office are distributed to the President of the College, Senior Staff, the Board of Trustees, and relevant campus committees (such as the Diversity Committee, Academic Planning Committee, and the Faculty Executive Committee). All data related to diversity and other indicators are also posted on the Institutional Research web page.

(3) Strategic Planning Proposal. During the 2003-2004 academic year, under the leadership of our then-recently appointed President, Pitzer engaged in a strategic planning process. A Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee was formed with two students, one staff member, one alumni representative, three faculty members, the Director of Institutional Research, the Vice President for Administration, the Dean of the Faculty, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the President. In order to achieve a holistic approach to planning in terms of community involvement and participation, the Committee used various approaches: holding committee meetings with individuals, organizing a day-long Pitzer College community retreat, engaging a consultant who visited the College on two separate occasions (meeting with over 60 individuals representing all of the College's constituency groups and intercollegiate programs), and conducting a two-hour follow-up meeting with almost 60 members of the community who provided advice about various proposals in discussions and surveys. The results of this planning process pointed in several directions.

- Guiding the discussions was a goal to encourage academic excellence and diversity among faculty, staff, and student body in order to build a community with intellectual vitality and cultural richness informed by that diversity. The strategic plan stems from the College's commitment to provide for the future of our students, faculty, and staff by creating a diverse intellectual and residential environment conducive to achieving academic vigor, quality residential life, and organizational effectiveness.

- Pitzer College is committed to creating an exceptional intellectual learning environment for students by encouraging excellence in faculty research, teaching, and advising. Many opportunities exist for faculty to engage in research with students to travel to conferences, participate in workshops related to teaching and advising, and to explore new curriculum development and research projects

through our generous sabbatical program. Pitzer provides opportunities for individual student growth through community involvement and is committed to increasing the opportunities for and access to a broad range of external studies programs globally and locally.

- It is our intention to connect the learning curriculum more closely to the co-curricular residential life of the College. Because the majority of students live on campus, creating an intellectually rich experience in an environment built to optimize learning is essential. This environment should engage staff, faculty, and students in creating a residential college that unites the curricular and co-curricular lives of our students within the context of social responsibility, diversity, and civic engagement.

- The College should review and analyze its educational objectives and the curriculum, focusing on such issues as balancing curricular goals (academic, nonacademic, and support/service programs), evaluating student and market demands (including class size), discussing teaching load, developing procedures for periodic comprehensive reviews of academic programs, and building commitment for an ongoing assessment program of educational objectives.

Several themes clearly emerge in the discussions and reports from the three initiatives and self-reviews, including the need to articulate more intentionally the link between the residential and academic lives of students, the importance of specifying more clearly student learning goals and the College's educational objectives in intercultural understanding and social responsibility, the commitment to improve opportunities for faculty to reflect on their teaching and curricular goals, and methods for improving assessment of the College's various majors and programs.



Process of Proposal Development & Leadership Involvement

The meaningful participation of students, staff, and faculty in College governance is a Pitzer hallmark. Indeed, in its letter summarizing the 1998 visit to the campus, WASC wrote: “The Commission commends Pitzer College for the exemplary and high quality campus dialogue that is sustained about educational goals. It also commends the way in which the College has been able to incorporate students into the reflections on the educational in which they are participating.” This tradition continues in the development of the WASC Institutional Proposal.

The Academic Planning Committee (APC), composed of four faculty, four students, and the Dean of Faculty, is charged with overseeing the WASC re-accreditation procedures. Working with the Director of Institutional Research, the Committee met several times beginning in the Spring 2005 semester and continuing in the Fall 2005 semester to discuss the new WASC process and guidelines. APC held several meetings with faculty, staff, and student groups to discuss the different options available for the review and decided upon the Special Themes approach as the most useful and relevant to Pitzer’s educational philosophy and academic goals, especially in light of the outcomes of the Irvine, Hewlett, and Strategic Planning reviews.

An Ad Hoc Steering Committee was created with one student, two staff members, a faculty member from APC, and the Director of Institutional Research who is also a faculty member. The first task was to decide on three special themes. Throughout the Fall 2005 semester, staff, students, and faculty met with their own constituent groups to solicit, talk about, and decide on the possible themes that had been generated by APC and at-large members of the Pitzer community. At a College Council meeting (an all-college voting group of faculty, students, and staff), the three themes for the accreditation review were approved.

In the Spring 2006 semester, working with the Dean of Faculty and the Director of Institutional Research, APC formed three thematic subcommit-

tees each focused on developing the research goals and indicators for one of the special themes. Two of the committees include three faculty members, three students, and three staff members. One committee has three faculty members, two staff, and three students involved. Two of the staff members and one of the faculty members are also alumni of the College.

Drafts of the Institutional Proposal were circulated to the faculty, student, and staff groups, and made available on line, for discussion and revision. The document was discussed and approved by APC on May 3, 2006 and brought forward for approval by the College Council on May 4, 2006.

Each of the subcommittees will continue to meet throughout the Capacity & Preparatory Review and Educational Effectiveness phases of the re-accreditation process. Although some turnover is anticipated due to sabbaticals and student graduations, continuity will be provided by the Academic Planning Committee, the Director of Institutional Research, and the Dean of Faculty. As each document is generated and a report is written, information will be posted on an institutional intranet site for easy access by faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Feedback will be solicited and used to revise the documents in preparation for the remaining phases of the re-accreditation process.



Goals of the Review Process

Central to Pitzer College's mission is a set of community values that provide the foundation for excellence in student learning. Many campus-wide discussions were held during the 2004-2005 academic year to develop these goals, partly as an outcome of the Irvine Campus Diversity Initiative. These aspirations for all members of our community are not enforceable requirements but rather ideals that promote ethical practices in a diverse community built upon trust.

COMMUNITY: We come together to live and work in a shared learning environment where every member is valued, respected, and entitled to dignity and honor founded upon the following rights and responsibilities:

DIVERSITY: We learn from the rich and complex histories, view points, and life experiences in our community. We value and celebrate the synergy created by our differences and similarities.

DIALOGUE: We support the thoughtful exchange of ideas to increase understanding and awareness, and to work across difference without intimidation. We have the right to be heard and the responsibility to listen. Communication, even at its most vigorous, should be respectful and without the intent to harm.

INQUIRY: We prize the powerful possibilities of learning and the principles reflected in our educational objectives including our dedication to access and justice, civic involvement and environmental sustainability, and our respect for pluralism, freedom of expression, and the sustained effort necessary for achieving academic excellence.

ACTION: These values are mere words until we practice them. We expect to see them evidenced, hear them named, debate their integrity, and demand change on their behalf. We are committed to the hard work and dedication this will demand.

Therefore, we envision our re-accreditation process as one method for verifying and sustaining these core community values. We have selected three themes that exemplify our commitment to these values and that put the values into action through our main educational objectives, especially intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, and social responsibility.

As a result of our re-accreditation endeavor, Pitzer College will have in place a set of procedures for evaluating and assessing new curricular and co-curricular programs of student learning, thereby institutionalizing a stronger culture of evidence. These methods of inquiry will focus on our capacity and educational effectiveness in providing students with learning experiences linked to (a) the nature of a residential college and the meaning of community as lived in environmentally sustainable residences; (b) the concern for civic involvement and diversity through a program of learning that connects the global with the local; and (c) improved oversight and assessment of the educational objectives of programs and majors through the implementation of a more rigorous external comprehensive evaluation of teaching and learning.

Other outcomes of the re-accreditation process include a deeper insight into the factors related to retention and graduation rates and the creation of innovative ways for building unique educational experiences related to our core educational objectives and values, in particular social responsibility, civic engagement, diversity, and intercultural understanding.



Approach for the Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR)

Plans for the Capacity and Preparatory Review will focus on the progress the College is making in designing educational experiences for our students that reflect our core community values and educational objectives. This will be accomplished through formative evaluations that present interim assessments of the various educational programs related to the special themes we describe in the next section, namely residential life, the global/local connection, and program evaluations.

The CPR is scheduled for submission in the summer of 2008 with a site visit in Fall 2008. Our plans for the formative evaluations begin in the Fall 2006 and will involve:

- reviewing the College's infrastructures and budgets as they relate to the special themes and identify key concerns [this is in keeping with CFRs 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7];

- reporting on the findings to the relevant committees, such as the Budget Implementation Committee (BIC), the Academic Planning Committee (APC), and the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC), for information and recommended actions by the end of the 2006-2007 year; and

- implementing any recommended actions that result from the initial assessments of infrastructures and budgets, and evaluating these changes for an updated report by the end of the 2007-2008 year.

Particularly related to the three special themes described in the next section, Thematic Subcommittees, working with the Office of Institutional Research, the Dean of Faculty, and the Academic Planning Committee, will continue to meet and

- design and implement measures for the collection of baseline data and assessments in the Fall 2006 for each of the special themes [this is in keeping with CFRs 2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7] ;

- review interim findings and report back to the

relevant committees by the end of the 2006-2007 year;

- implement any recommended actions that result from the initial assessments; and

- evaluate these actions for an updated report by the end of the 2007-2008 year.

Various documents, essays, and survey findings will be posted on an internal web page devoted to the themes of the re-accreditation process for review and discussion by faculty, staff, and students at their respective meetings, and by the College Council for any formal approvals. These materials will become part of the final CPR report and the foundation for the next phase of the process, the Educational Effectiveness Review.

Approach for the Educational Effectiveness Review (EER)

After many discussions with faculty, students, and staff, Pitzer College decided to use the Special Themes approach, given our need to focus our assessment on issues directly related to student learning at a residential college. In particular, in response to concerns raised in our 1998 WASC review, the College is determined to understand more fully our retention rates, implement educational policies and programs that might improve graduation rates, and enhance our methods for documenting and assessing needed changes through formative evaluations.

In keeping with the central values of the College and core educational objectives related to intercultural understanding, respect for diversity, commitment to community and social responsibility, and academic excellence, Pitzer College proposes a special themes approach that will

- build strategic intellectual links between the academic and residential lives of our students in association with the opening of environmentally sustainable residence halls,

- develop formative evaluations of newly proposed Program and Field Group Reviews designed to enhance student learning, and

- assess the connections between the local and the global in learning and action.



We envision the process beginning with the collection of baseline data in the Fall 2006 for each of the special themes as described later. It will continue through the development of further assessments and evaluations associated with the interim reports described earlier in preparation for the CPR site visit in the Fall 2008, and continue for the 18 months when the EER is due in Spring or Summer 2010. Along the way, reports from the three sub-

committees will be presented to and evaluated by the relevant committees and Senior Staff, used as formative evaluations that serve as a guide for making changes in the programs under review, and reflect additional assessment for the new changes. The objectives to be analyzed and the indicators used to evaluate achievement of the objectives for each of the three themes are described in detail below.

THEME ONE: LINKING THE ACADEMIC WITH RESIDENTIAL LIFE

As a residential liberal arts institution, the centerpiece of Pitzer College's academic experience is integrating the physical elements of our campus with the programmatic dimensions of our unique educational objectives. Since 2001, students, faculty, and staff have been involved in connecting Pitzer's core values with the residential life of the College. Specifically, it has created a Residential Life and Learning Project with goals to:

- Create social spaces to enhance community and diversity, and strengthen and affirm Pitzer's culture and identity;
- Embody environmental sensitivity through ecological design that teaches as well as conserves;
- Replace existing dorms and build seven new residence halls to increase residential capacity from 76% to 93% of the student body; and
- Integrate academic and residential life by
 - incorporating instructional spaces into the adjacent living areas (e.g., expanded study, meeting and social gathering spaces, the Writing Center, art gallery, art studio, seminar rooms),
 - including faculty apartments in the residences, and

- developing Learning Communities (e.g., Science Learning Community, International/Intercultural Learning Community).

Pitzer has begun to create "buildings that teach" by emphasizing local, renewable and recycled materials; limiting negative impacts on the environment; and involving students in conservation activities. In addition, a Residential Learning Community is planned to bring diverse students together in residences and provide curricular and co-curricular programming especially designed to enhance their social and intellectual experience.

Capacities

Construction is currently underway and fund-raising is on-going to support the Residential Life and Learning Project. The first phase of construction provides an opportunity to begin an assessment of the Residential Life and Learning project. In addition, a quintessential part of Pitzer's existing residential liberal arts experience is the emphasis on learning as a community endeavor. Pitzer's tradition of "themed corridors" already offers a foundation for the creation of Learning Communities in the new residence halls that focus on academic themes (such as Science, International & Intercultural Programs, and Writing and Humanities), and that offer special amenities, programs, faculty support, and interactions designed to enhance the learning experience.

Research Questions

1. What impact will the new residence halls have on student satisfaction and success? In particular,



will the integration of academic and residential space improve student learning and the student experience at Pitzer? Will themed halls (e.g., Science Learning Community, International & Intercultural Learning Community) facilitate learning and success in the fields chosen as themes? Has student input in the planning process been incorporated into the project so as to increase student satisfaction and promote learning?

2. Will the on-going residential life project improve the environmental practices of the Pitzer community and raise environmental awareness among faculty, staff and students?

3. Does the residential life experience foster student awareness of and appreciation for the Pitzer Community Values of community, diversity, dialogue, inquiry and action (see earlier Goals of the Review Process section)? How can the residential experience be enhanced to further Pitzer's ability to promote these ideals?

Evidence and Other Data Analysis

There are a number of information sources that we can use to answer these questions including: 1) focus groups and annual surveys about student satisfaction; 2) attitudinal surveys about Pitzer's Community Values (community, diversity, dialogue, inquiry and action), environmental values, and environmental practices; 3) data on academic success (including cumulative GPA, academic honors and academic probation), application and matriculation rates, retention rates, graduation rates, the number of majors in fields chosen for themed halls, grades in specific fields with comparisons across residence halls; 4) surveys about the environmental knowledge, awareness, and practices of faculty and staff; 5) environmental audits that measure energy use, water consumption, the use of chemical products, etc. with comparisons across residence halls; 6) ethnographies (possibly done through field methods courses) that reveal qualitative information about student satisfaction, success, environmental awareness, and environmental practices; 7) student journals and reflective essays on relevant themes. Data analysis will also include disaggregating findings by ethnicity/race and gender to improve our understanding of the impact of a residential college on our commitment to diversity.

THEME TWO: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEWS OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

“*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*”
(conventionally translated as “Who will guard the guardians?”)
— Juvenal (c. 100 CE), Sixth Satire

Definitions:

As an undergraduate liberal arts college, Pitzer's primary goal is to provide the very best education possible to our undergraduates. At Pitzer, our curriculum is organized primarily by field groups, which are more decentralized and, in some cases at least, less rigid in their reliance on disciplinary boundaries than are departmental units at most comparable institutions. Because many of our field groups offer a curriculum that has experimental or unconventional elements, the College believes it is particularly important that the field groups, and the curriculum they offer, be rigorously evaluated. Such evaluation, the College believes, allows us to judge, on an ongoing basis, what in the curriculum is working and what needs improvement.

To accomplish such evaluation of its field groups, the College in 2005 adopted an expanded process of field group review, with the new name of Comprehensive Reviews. In effect, this decision came out of a process of the College assessing its then existing policy of evaluating its academic programs through “self studies” that did not have any “outside review” component. The judgment made was that, though the “self study” process had many good elements, it was not itself sufficient, and so the College expanded this process to include for each field group a self-study, followed by an outside review, followed by further self-study, in dialogue with the outside review report. It is this three-stage (and three year) process that the College adopted as its new Comprehensive Review process.

In addition to being geared in particular to the experimental dimension of Pitzer's curriculum, the new Comprehensive Review process has been designed to take into account two important factors: (1) the highly variable and shifting relationship of



Pitzer's field group's to corresponding departments at the other Claremont Colleges, and (2) the fact that at any time in the life of any College, some units (in our case, field groups) will face more challenges than others. The College believes that the Comprehensive Review process should and will be particularly helpful to field groups when they are indeed confronted with difficulties, as is inevitable in the life of any college over the long term. For this theme, we are proposing an ongoing assessment of this newly instituted process of periodic assessment of field groups and programs.

Capacities

Pitzer has in place a detailed set of policies for its new Comprehensive Review process. These were devised, reviewed, revised, and approved by the College's committee system and governing bodies in 2004-2005. In addition, line items have been added to the budget to cover adequately the anticipated costs of this new initiative. The Reviews will begin in 2006-2007.

Assessing the New Comprehensive Reviews at Pitzer

How should the College assess the effectiveness of this review process? What is new for Pitzer in the 2005 policy is not reviewing Field Groups, but going beyond self-studies by the Field Groups to include reviews by an outside Visiting Committee and subsequent reflection on that Committee's review. Our assessment design addresses both the policy itself and the novelties in it.

To judge how the policy works in general, we first need to see how it works for the specific programs that have been evaluated. This requires asking the relevant constituencies what they think. We propose a set of questions suggested both by the policy and by the nature of the College, and we also give some ideas for improving the assessment of program reviews as time goes on.

The people and groups most likely to have valuable information about the effects of a specific review are the Dean of Faculty, the students in the program, any staff members involved with the program, any partners in the other Claremont colleges who are associated with the program, the Pitzer

Academic Planning Committee, the Pitzer Faculty Executive Committee, and, last but not least, the faculty in the program under review. In some cases, there will be others as well, whom the Field Group will identify. They would all be asked to respond succinctly to these questions. The written responses will be collected by the Dean of Faculty's office and reviewed by the Faculty Executive Committee.

(i) The College will seriously consider suggestions made by the review and, when appropriate, will take steps to make things better.

(ii) Are the actions taken actually helping?

(iii) Did the outside reviewers make a difference? That is, did the people in the program get ideas beyond those in their self-study? In the third year of the process, the period of reflection on the self-study and the outside review, did they find that they had learned significantly more?

(iv) Were the composition, seriousness of purpose, and disinterestedness (that is, absence of a prior agenda) of the Visiting Committee appropriate? If not, how could a better job be done in selecting future Visiting Committees?

(v) If problems were identified by the review, did the review process accelerate improvement?

(vi) Do those in the program believe that the process was productive and valuable, given the time and effort invested?

(vii) Did the administration provide appropriate support: for the program being reviewed to do its self-study; for the outside review and subsequent reflection; and, above all, to assist with the measures needed for improvement?

We hope that the Visiting Committees will include benchmarks with any recommendations to help the Field Groups assess their progress; we would ask the Visiting Committee also for their recommendations for improving the review process in general. We will also seek information about how other institutions assess their own processes of reviewing programs, information which should be especially useful after we have had some experience using our own procedures. And after the present policy has been in place for five years, we should



have a discussion involving all faculty members, and all others who have been associated with completed reviews, asking the same questions (that is, i-vii listed above), and asking in general whether the review process is working well. Before this discussion, the Dean of Faculty's office will prepare an executive summary of the written reports generated about the individual reviews; the full reports will be made available in the Dean of Faculty's office for all interested faculty to consult.

THEME THREE: CONNECTING THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL

For almost two decades, the College has required that Pitzer students acquire a somewhat vaguely specified level of international and intercultural understanding. The primary vehicle for achieving this objective has been the selection of three courses from two or more disciplines addressing a culture different from the student's own culture, either abroad or within the United States. In many cases, students met this objective through course work, utilizing community-based pedagogy, language acquisition, and experiential learning promoted by the College's international programs of external study. Some students chose to focus on cultural difference within the United States. Historically, international cultural difference was treated as distinct from domestic cultural difference. However, the forces and processes that we have come to call globalization have increasingly brought global and local cultures together and each acts to re-shape, re-define, and reconfigure the other. Patterns of human migration, and the experience and impact of diaspora communities, the global integration of commercial and financial markets, the rapid diffusion of information and communication technologies, the transmission of human disease and the trans-border diffusion of environmental threats all suggest more intentional linkages between the global and the local. Responsible citizens must acquire a deeper understanding of these issues, they must develop the skills necessary to navigate the differences and inequalities they will encounter among cultures and peoples, and they must learn how to act on these issues in effective and meaningful ways. Our intention is to further develop the college's approach to achieving international and intercultural understanding informed by

this increased connection between global processes and local communities. The three goals that follow are designed to help us enhance our practice of this college objective.

Goal 1. Deepening Knowledge and

Understanding. We seek ways to encourage all members of Pitzer community to explore and to analyze the connections between global processes and local developments and dynamics.

Implementation. The College already offers many opportunities to examine global and local connections and their intercultural impacts through courses, external study opportunities, community-based language learning, internships experiences, and other diverse college programming. We propose to survey, organize, and strengthen these opportunities and to make clearer their contribution to the understanding of global-local connections. We also propose to develop a group of paired courses across the curriculum, one taught during the traditional academic semester on the Pitzer campus and the second addressing similar issues offered during the summer or winter break at an off-campus site that would provide students with opportunities for field research and direct engagement with a different culture. Examples might include: an American environmental policy course offered at Pitzer paired with an environmental policy practicum situated in China, Costa Rica or Botswana; an American immigration policy course paired with an immigration policy course in Italy or the UK; a course on Spanish diaspora communities in the US paired with a language practicum offered in a Spanish speaking diaspora community in Latin America. To help students understand the historical development of these issues a course on the history of the police state might be paired with a course or practicum on the work of a truth and reconciliation court; a course on North African colonialism might be paired with a course or practicum on Muslim immigrant groups in Europe. These paired courses would provide students the opportunity to examine an issue in depth with global and local dimensions, and build their knowledge of the issue in ways that could promote follow-up related course work, the development of skills necessary to a deeper understanding, and a commitment to the issue that could result in student engagement and action. This pilot project would build on the preparatory work done by Pitzer faculty in a number of external sites supported by the Mellon Foundation.

Assessment. We propose to track the enrollments



of related courses, the experiences of students in External Studies programs, and the engagement of students in internship and community based activities in the Los Angeles area. In particular we will track the experiences and activities of students engaged in the pilot project of paired courses. Students will be asked to compile “field books” on the successful model currently used in our External Studies Programs that encourage regular reflections on both their course work and their on-site experiences. Many of these reflections will be directed to the connections and comparisons between global and local. Students will also be followed to determine how many used the paired course experience as a springboard to the acquisition of related skills and competencies and meaningful engagement on these issues later in their college experience.

Goal 2. Developing Skills and Competencies. We seek to create avenues to develop skills and competencies for acting and interacting in this world of increased global and local connections

Implementation. We seek to build the following skills/competencies in our students and in our faculty and staff to help them navigate connections between the global and the local: (1) effective intercultural communication; (2) community based language acquisition sensitive to cultural context; (3) the ability to engage diversity and address power differences; (4) the capacity to promote conflict resolution that strengthens democracy and promotes social justice; (5) the ability to conduct ethically grounded community-based research and service; (6) and the acquisition of organizational skills to promote meaningful change. We propose to build these skills through four initiatives, pending funding. First, we will mount faculty/staff development workshops that stress the building of competencies for engaging diversity and inequality in global and local settings. Second, we will explore curricular development to foster student competencies in intercultural communication, conflict resolution, and community-based research prior to studying abroad or working with local community-based organizations. Third, we propose to foster student competencies in our new External Studies exchange sites by incorporating home stays, community-based language learning, and opportunities for service learning or community-based research. Fourth, we seek to introduce and practice these acquired competencies in relations among groups and individuals on the Pitzer campus and through projects linked to local community-based organizations, facilitated by

Pitzer’s California Center for Cultural and Social Issues (CCCSI) and the Pitzer Program in Ontario, California. We expect that work here might overlap with Pitzer’s proposed theme on residential life.

Assessment. We plan to track the various strategies employed to build skills and competencies and to find evidence that such skills have been acquired through exit interviews done with students returning from abroad, qualitative analysis of fieldbook entries, and pre/post empathy surveys. Another measure will be faculty and staff participation in development workshops along with the impacts such workshop have on curricular offerings. A further outcome will be the success in developing the proposed preparatory course or courses, the student enrollment in such courses, and the quality of student work produced. The enrichment of our External Studies exchange programs will be identified and measured through the application of the empowerment evaluation framework already used for the ongoing self-assessment of our existing External Studies programs. Finally, we will seek to evaluate the impact acquired competences have on residential living, college governance, and teaching pedagogy.

Goal 3. Fostering Engagement and Action. We seek to develop opportunities to engage the issues emerging from global and local connections and to act on those issues in meaningful ways.

Implementation. We aim to create a culture of engagement and action through course-related projects, student-faculty research, conferences, and regular dialogue that features students as teachers and mentors. While we will promote and organize some activities, we hope and expect that armed with new skills and competencies, students, faculty, and staff will imagine and create their own strategies for engagement and action. We will encourage students in the paired course project to imagine feasible and meaningful projects that might follow their course work such as community-based research; student-led discussions and seminars on global/local issues such as immigration, environmental protection, or HIV/AIDS; or internships in local community organizations. Making use of student knowledge and resources on global/local issues as well as those of faculty and staff may be an effective vehicle for developing a teaching and learning program on the Pitzer campus and extending that learning to local public schools and other community based organizations. We imagine students as active participants in faculty



research projects that might logically result in publications recommending social action or policy change. We also propose an annual global-local conference on a theme of common interest that would bring to campus academics, community spokespersons, and policy officials.

Assessment. We propose a baseline survey of engagement and action currently underway on the Pitzer campus and a monitoring of activities through the course of this undertaking. Appropriate indicators of an increased level of activity of this sort might include numbers of students engaged in related faculty research and resultant publications, conference activity on topics of global/local connections, student engagement in peer teaching activities, and student participation in related internships and service learning.

We envision a review of the progress toward the achievement of all three goals in three to four years (due for the EER in Spring 2010) and again at the end of six years. Following the first review, we propose a college-wide discussion about possible revisions to the college's intercultural/interdisciplinary objective informed by the activities of this project.

Effectiveness of Data Gathering and Analysis Systems

Since our WASC review in 1998, Pitzer has established an Office of Institutional Research with its own budget to carry on the tasks of developing and maintaining databases of information about the College, its students, staff, and faculty. Beginning with a part-time role for the Associate Dean of Faculty, the Director has since been made a full-time position

reporting to the President of the College.

The Office, working with the Office of Public Information, the Registrar's Office, the Admissions Office, and the Treasurer's Office, annually compiles benchmark data about the College for an internal Fact Book, Institutional Research web page, and a Dashboard for the Board of Trustees. The Office is also responsible, with the assistance of a half-time Associate Director of Institutional Research, for completing external surveys for various national publications, federal agencies, and the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) consortium.

In addition, the Office conducts annual surveys of first-year students, sophomores, seniors, and alumni, which assess satisfaction with the academic, residential, and support services of the College; and monitor attitudes and actions related to commitment to social responsibility and to issues of diversity.

Commitment of Resources to Support Accreditation Process

The Office of Institutional Research, in cooperation with the Academic Planning Committee and the Office of the Dean of Faculty, will oversee the re-accreditation process. Faculty, students, staff, alumni, and trustees are and will be involved in all aspects of the process. Discussions with the Budget Implementation Committee have occurred and budgets are in place to accommodate additional costs for the re-accreditation and to cover the new programming and evaluations proposed in our special themes. Continuous review of our financial and personnel resources for the re-accreditation process will occur through appropriate committees of the College.



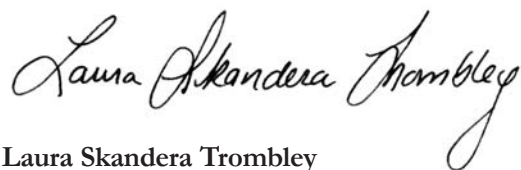
Institutional Stipulations

1. Pitzer College is using the review process to demonstrate its fulfillment of the two Core Commitments. We will engage in the process with seriousness and candor, present data that are accurate, and represent Pitzer fairly with the Institutional Presentation.

2. Pitzer College has published and made publicly available policies in force as identified by the Commission. Such policies will be available for review on request throughout the period of accreditation. Special attention will be paid to the institution's policies and recordkeeping regarding complaints and appeals.

3. Pitzer College will abide by procedures adopted by the Commission to meet United States Department of Education (USDE) procedural requirements.

4. Pitzer College will submit all regularly required data, and any data specifically requested by the Commission during the period of Accreditation.



Laura Skandera Trombley
President, Pitzer College





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