

Self Study Update

A REPORT ON THE TEN-YEAR ACCREDITATION REVIEW PROCESS FOR THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION (NCA) OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
OCTOBER 2004

Accreditation Review Team Visit, November 8-10

After three years of planning, committee work and all-campus reviews, the accreditation review process is entering its final phase. On Monday, November 8 through Wednesday, November 10, we will be visited by a team of five reviewers. These evaluators come from peer institutions that also are accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. They will arrive here Sunday evening and decide then which departments, offices, and committees they wish to visit, principally on Monday and Tuesday.

Highlights of the visit

- *Spontaneous visits to departments, offices and committees.* In order to avoid scripting or staging of their meetings, the review team will not announce its schedule of visits until 8:15 Monday morning. Just as soon as the team's choices for visits and interviews are announced, the provost's office will send notices (via phone, e-mail or semaphore) to each targeted department, office and committee, requesting that the department head assemble all who can possibly make it at that time.

- *Forum for TEACHING FACULTY, Monday November 8, 4-5 p.m., Chapel Undercroft.* The review team wants to have an open forum to explain their work, ask questions and field questions from the faculty with no administrative officers present. This is an opportunity to engage the team in open and candid conversation. The team members will also announce their availability for private interviews.
- *Forum for ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, Tuesday November 9, 4-5 p.m., Chapel Undercroft.* The review team is hosting an open forum for administrative staff members, with no teaching faculty or members of the President's Cabinet present, so they can explain their review, field questions, and ask questions in an open and candid conversation. The team members will also state that they are available for private interviews.
- *Forum for STUDENTS, Tuesday November 9, 4-5 p.m., Forum of the DeVos Communication Center.* The review team hopes to meet with students, and only students, so they can explain their visit, field questions, and converse with students in a spontaneous and candid exchange. The team members will make themselves available for private interviews.

We request that all faculty and staff be present on campus from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. on both Monday and Tuesday.

Likely questions or themes from review team members

- The *self-study* process and Calvin College's commitment to institutional research, planning, and especially—*assessment*. How are we doing on this front?
- *Mission*: we say we are quite focused on our educational aims and ideals, but is it so?
- *Diversity and preparedness* for a globally interactive future. The self-study tells the story of Calvin's dramatic moves along these lines. What do you know and think about them?
- *Teaching and learning*. We portray Calvin as a place that is devoted to teaching as "job one," and where we have been engaged in major pedagogical and curricular initiatives. How is that emphasis reflected in our work, our priorities?
- *Research and scholarship*. The self-study depicts dynamism on this front, but worries about capacity to sustain it all. What are your thoughts?
- *Serving our constituencies*. The college has done much to reach outward after decades of focusing inward. Yet many challenges remain if Calvin is to dispel old images and advance to new levels of service. How have these challenges affected your work?
- *Resources*. Calvin has been succeeding famously in funding new and renovated facilities, electronic infrastructure and information services, student scholarships, and new chairs, programs, and institutes. But

advancing each year's basic operating budget has been an adventure. What are your perspectives on this issue?

Calvin College Self-Study Report Fall 2004

Paper copies of the full self-study report are now being distributed. Each department chair will receive a paper copy of the report, and additional copies will be provided for departments in order to make one available for every four or five members. If you want your own additional paper copy, please contact the Provost's Office and ask for one. The self-study is also available on the web at

www.calvin.edu/admin/provost/accreditation/index.htm

The Review Team

Members of the review team ask that their names be withheld until they arrive, but here is a list of their home campuses:

- Columbia College, Missouri
 - Earlham College, Indiana
 - Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota
 - Wartburg College, Iowa
 - Wooster College, Ohio
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The Team's Findings

The team will be working on the report while on site, and the members will give a preliminary briefing before they leave. Their written report, however, will take another six weeks to arrive, and the formal decision on reaccreditation will take place at the Higher Learning Commission's meetings in the spring term.

Thank you once again, one and all, for your strong support of this effort. Calvin is in good shape for reaccreditation, we believe, but we want to get the most out of the visit and report from our peer reviewers. Your cooperation is most appreciated.