



Virginia Commonwealth University

**Focused Report**  
**For**  
**Virginia Commonwealth University**

Submitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Focused Report presents a follow-up to several comments from the Off-Site Review Committee as these relate to specific Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, or Federal Mandate. The number of each Core Requirement, Comprehensive Standard, or Federal Mandate precedes the discussion of that item. Clicking on each numbered item (for example, “Core Requirement 7”) will link the reader to the original narrative provided in the Compliance Certification.

A description of the comments of the Off-Site Review Committee is then presented. The narrative that addresses these comments follows. Embedded within the narrative are electronic links to web pages or .pdf files that provide supporting documentation. At the end of each narrative, a list of the electronic links and their addresses is provided.

## **CORE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Core Requirement 7c**

The Off-site Review Committee for VCU's Compliance Certification was not able to determine whether VCU was in compliance with Core Requirement 7c and made several comments about this requirement, with most of the comments related to item 7c2. These comments are listed below, with VCU's response to each comment following it.

First, the Off-site Review Committee believed that some courses appeared to be narrowly focused on skills and procedures that are particular to a profession, for example, MASC 375, MASC 403, and PSYC 493. The reviewers suggested that VCU demonstrate that these and other courses are not narrowly focused or that the University should consider removing them from the list of approved general education courses.

The following additional information is provided to clarify the choice of specific courses that VCU includes under general education.

At VCU, all undergraduate students must take ENGL 101 and 200 (English 101 – The Craft of Writing – and English 200 – The Craft of Writing with Research). In addition, the College of Humanities and Sciences – and most of the other schools – require that their undergraduate students take an upper-division writing-intensive course in the major.

The requirements for a course to be considered Writing Intensive are that students write regularly with regard to their course work, keeping reading or course journals (notebooks, lab notebooks, etc.), writing weekly responses to readings or lectures, or working steadily on the drafting and redrafting of written projects. Such regular writing teaches students the power of writing as a mode of learning – not just as a medium of communication – thus supporting the expressed general education goal of promoting critical thinking and the goal that demands students have an active involvement in course subject matter. Writing promotes active learning, and students who incorporate writing to learn as a habit in their lives will do well in their lifelong learning. Writing Intensive courses also require that students receive regular feedback to the content of their written work

from faculty and/or peers—thus supporting the general education goal of promoting collaborative learning among faculty and students. Students who recognize the value of collaborative learning and incorporate it into their repertoire of strategies for learning will do well as lifelong learners.

The only general education requirement that can be met with either MASC 375 or MASC 403 is the College of Humanities and Sciences' writing-intensive requirement in the major. The inventory of courses given on page 45 of the 2002-2003 Undergraduate Bulletin lists writing-intensive courses for majors within the College of Humanities and Sciences. Because a writing-intensive requirement must be in the major, most of the writing-intensive courses are narrowly focused. In addition, since MASC 375 has not been taught in several years, as it has been rolled into a new course, MASC 475, the College of Humanities and Sciences will delete the course and remove it from the list of acceptable writing intensive courses.

The only general education requirement that can be met with PSYC 493 is the Urban Environment requirement in the College of Humanities and Sciences. The College goes beyond the general education requirements of the and asks each of its students to take a course specifically related to the environment in which VCU is located. Almost all of these courses are in the major. The College of Humanities and Sciences believes PSYC 493, Fieldwork – Mentoring Urban Youth, although narrowly focused, is a very appropriate course to meet the “urban environment” requirement.

In addition, VCU examined the syllabi of other general education courses with titles or descriptions that indicate that the courses could be seen as narrowly focused. Outside of the writing-intensive requirement discussed above, the courses that the off-site reviewers identified and most of the courses that may appear to be narrowly focused are those designed to meet the ethics requirement. Thus, VCU's response focuses on the ethics requirement.

At VCU courses to be included in the *ethics* general education requirement can range from an ethics course offered in the Philosophy department to substantive courses in other fields where ethical thinking and problem solving are clearly a significant emphasis within the curriculum. Ethical thinking and problem solving occur within a specific context and these courses must provide both the context and the situations that generate specific ethical issues. Whereas in the philosophy courses students would be moving from general principles to concrete applications, in the substantive courses students would be required to move from concrete application to general principle.

With the exception of SOCY 445, several courses on the approved list of ethics courses in the College of Humanities and Sciences appear narrowly focused. Although they appear to be discipline centered, they clearly focus on ethics both in their descriptions and their syllabi. The syllabi for these courses and for other courses in the general education program will be available in the resource room.

- MASC 290, Mass Communications 290, Ethical Problems in Mass Media. In the syllabus for this course, the opening description is true to the name of the course: “Students will address the moral dimensions of issues that arise in the practice of print journalism, broadcast journalism, advertising and public relations.” The description continues: “Students also will learn to apply philosophical concepts to their decision-making processes.” Although focused on the media, this course also helps students make better decisions in their lives and thus is broadly enough focused to serve as a general education course.
- PHIL 213, Philosophy 213, Ethics and Health Care. In the syllabus for this course, the opening description of it says “our focus will be on the moral philosophy first, that is, on the various approaches to moral reasoning most prominent in the field, and then on how these operate in discussions of biomedical morals.” Clearly this course has significant ethics content and it is not narrowly focused.
- PHIL 214, Philosophy 214, Ethics and Business. Throughout the description and syllabus for this course, it is clear that it is a course on ethics as they are applied to business. The issues discussed in this course (for instance affirmative action, investment in unethical companies of countries, product safety, whistle blowing, and advertising) can and do affect all of us; thus, the course is broadly enough focused to serve as a general education course.
- SOCY 445, Sociology 445, Medical Sociology. Although the course description does not mention ethics, the syllabus does so. Some of the required readings have ethical dimensions, and ethical issues are discussed in class. The course focuses on discussion of ethical issues within the medical context. Students do not learn some abstract principles of ethical thinking but rather struggle with real world ethical decisions, in this case in the medical world. VCU believes that this course is broadly enough focused to serve as a general education course.

Second, the Off-site Review Committee indicated that it was not evident that some courses in the approved list of general education courses contain the content related to the general education area. For example, for non-Western culture, the list contains courses on the Caribbean, Mexico, Brazil, and Latin America.

VCU agrees with this comment. However, the courses identified by the reviewers apply only to students entering the College of Humanities and Sciences **PRIOR** to the 1997 Fall semester. Non-Western culture is not a general education category for students entering in or after the 1997 Fall semester. The list of general education courses for students entering prior to the 1997 Fall semester is on pages 47, 48, and 49 of the 2002-2003 Undergraduate

Bulletin. The list of courses for students entering in or after the 1997 Fall semester is on pages 45 and 46 of the 2002-2003 Undergraduate Bulletin.

Third, the Off-site Review Committee identified several courses listed for the School of the Arts for the ethics area that don't appear to contain content on ethics; specifically, the reviewers identified IDES 210, MUED 298, SCPT 211, 212, 212, 311, 312, 411, 412, and THEA 113 and 114 in this category.

VCU agrees with this comment, although we believe the reviewers were referring to IDES 201 rather than IDES 210, and MUED 290 rather than MUED 298 since neither IDES 210 nor MUES 298 exist. The names of the courses identified by the of-site reviewers are:

- IDES 201 refers to Interior Design 201, Introductory Interior Design Studio.
- MUED 290 refers Music Education 290, Introduction to Music in General Education.
- SCPT 211, 212, 311, 312, 411, and 412 refer to Sculpture 211, 212, 311, 312, 411, and 412. Each course in this sequence is named "Sculpture."
- THEA 113 and 114 refer to Theatre 113 and 114, Acting 1.

The School of the Arts and other VCU individuals have examined the syllabi for each of the courses identified by the off-site reviewers and found that most of the current syllabi fail to include ethics content. The School of the Arts has initiated curricular action at the school level to delete each of these courses from its list of courses meeting the general education ethics requirement. The school expects that its action will be taken before the end of January 2004 and that its request to delete these courses from the list of courses meeting general education requirements in the School of the Arts will be forwarded to the University Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UUCC) in February 2004. By the time the on-site reviewers are on VCU's campus in March 2004, UUCC will either have initiated its review or acted on the requests from the School of the Arts. Beginning with the 2004 Fall semester, these courses will no longer meet general education ethics requirements in the School of the Arts.

In addition to the courses that were identified by the off-site reviewers, School of the Arts faculty and others reviewed the course descriptions for other School of the Arts courses identified by that school as meeting its general education ethics requirement. Courses that will be removed are as follows:

- ARTE 401 and 402, Concepts in Art Education III and IV: Elementary Materials and Practicum. Both of these courses have been deleted, although they inadvertently were retained in the listing of ethics courses meeting the School of the Arts requirements. They will be removed from this listing.

- ARTF 107, Introduction to the Arts. ARTF 107 is no longer taught in the Art Foundation program and will be removed from the next Undergraduate Bulletin. This course does not appear on the School of the Arts ethics course list in the 2003-2004 Undergraduate Bulletin.
- ARTH 355, Symbolic Expression in the Visual Arts. The description for this course does not mention ethics. The department will request removal of ARTH 355 from the ethics list using appropriate University procedures during the 2004 Spring semester.
- ARTH 438, The Roots of Modernism. The description for this course does not mention ethics. The department will request removal of ARTH 438 from the ethics list using appropriate University procedures during the 2004 Spring semester.
- ARTH 468, Studies in Museum Methods. This course has been deleted, although it inadvertently was retained in the listing of ethics courses meeting the School of the Arts requirements. The course will be removed from this listing.
- ARTH 493, Museum Internship. The description for this course does not mention ethics. The department will request removal of ARTH 493 from the ethics list using appropriate University procedures during the 2004 Spring semester.
- MUED 391, Processes of Music Education. The description for this course does not mention ethics. The department will request removal of MUED 391 from the Ethics list using appropriate University procedures during Spring Semester.

Syllabi for the courses that the School of the Arts plans to keep on the list of courses that meet the ethics requirement will be available in the resource room. The courses (other than those discussed above) that currently meet the ethics requirement in the School of the Arts are:

- ARTE 310, Foundations in Art Education. Although the description for this course does not mention ethics, the course includes considerable content on issues related to ethics.
- ARTH/WMNS 457, Women, Art and Society. Although this course does not include ethics in its description, the syllabus shows significant ethics content.
- CARD 356, Studio Management. This course includes ethics in its description and includes ethical content throughout the course.

- CRAF 482, Senior Seminar. Although the description for this course does not mention ethics, this seminar course focuses on issues related to making and exhibiting art, including ethical issues.
- IDES 431, Business Practice. This course includes ethics in its description and includes ethical content throughout the course.

Fourth, the Off-site Review Committee had a question about whether the course “History of Political Thought” met the ethics requirement.

VCU believes that POLI 341 (Political Science 341 – the History of Political Thought) meets the general education ethics requirement. The syllabus for this course shows that it has significant content from ethicists throughout the ages. Although the word “ethics” appears neither in the course description nor in the syllabi, the content clearly integrates ethical content, and students study early philosophers such as Kant and Locke.

Finally, the Off-site Review Committee asked VCU to prepare documentation that the courses listed meet the University’s *ethics* general education requirements for all schools and the college. The reviewers suggested that we prepare a matrix that would make it quickly and easily apparent *what* the *relative content* component was, that is, what in a course makes it meet the general education *ethics* requirement. SACS Liaison with VCU suggested that the University prepare a matrix that provides an overview of which courses meet general education requirements for each of VCU’s undergraduate schools.

The [general education matrix](#) given here lists the seven general curricular elements for general education (communication, ethics, quantity and form, science and technology, interdependence, visual and performing arts, and humanities and social sciences) with the corresponding requirements by each of the schools and the college offering undergraduate majors. The approved lists for the [College of Humanities and Sciences](#) and for the [School of the Arts](#) referenced in the matrix can be found in the [2002-03 Undergraduate Bulletin](#). Course syllabi for these general education courses will be available in the resource room for the On-site Review Committee. (NOTE: To enlarge the type in the matrix, use the “Zoom In” tool. When printing the matrix, use legal size paper.

### Electronic Links

Core Requirement 7c:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CR\\_7.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CR_7.pdf)

General Education Matrix:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/matrix.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/matrix.pdf)

College of Humanities and Sciences Approved GE Courses:

<http://www.vcu.edu/bulletins/200203/ub/05.pdf>

School of the Arts Approved GE Courses:

<http://www.vcu.edu/bulletins/200203/ub/07.pdf>

VCU 2002-03 Undergraduate Bulletin:

<http://www.vcu.edu/bulletins/200203/ub>

## **Core Requirement 9**

The SACS Off-Site Visiting Team identified three areas of concern regarding the VCU Libraries in the Core Requirements section of VCU's Compliance Certification report.

1. Adequacy of library funding with respect to VCU's current programs, enrollment, and anticipated growth in programs and enrollment.
2. Documentation of the VCU Libraries process for reviewing new course and program proposals.
3. Faculty and student involvement in policy and program development of the VCU Libraries.

### **Adequacy of funding**

Virginia Commonwealth University acknowledges the funding constraints of the VCU Libraries when compared with universities of similar scope, programs, and enrollment. However, during each of the budget cuts imposed on the University, VCU Libraries had smaller percentage budget reductions than most University units because the Libraries are considered a core program. Therefore, the University used a portion of increased tuition funding to maintain the Libraries operating hours and budget reductions to library operations were limited to \$80,000. The library materials budget was reduced by \$640,000.

Because the VCU Libraries are considered a core service, the University added \$84,302 in permanent funding in FY03-04 to restore personnel funding to pre-reduction levels. In addition, the University was able to restore \$200,000 in fiscal year 2003 to collections funding to restore key research journal subscriptions. The restoration reduced total collections cuts to \$452,000.

To address the long-term funding for VCU Libraries, Virginia Commonwealth University is exploring options to strengthen funding for its library system. The University has requested and received a comprehensive five-year plan from the University Librarian for a significant enhancement of funding for the VCU

Libraries. The amount of enhanced funding will be determined by the middle of May 2004 when VCU's Board of Visitors adopts its 2004-2005 budget.

#### Documentation of approval process for new course and program proposals

All new course and program proposals require a review by the VCU Libraries to ascertain library resources available for the courses and programs. The VCU Libraries has reviewed 26 new degree program proposals and 1,373 course proposals since 1990. The detailed count of [proposals](#) submitted, as well as samples of reviewed [degree proposals](#) and [course proposals](#) are shown in the appropriate hyperlinks. A complete file of all reviewed degree and course proposals will be available in the Resource Room.

VCU Libraries staff review degree and course proposals with rigor and approve only if there is confidence that the current resources can support the program as described. However, degree and course proposals are reviewed only once by the VCU Libraries. Subsequent changes in library resources that might affect the ability of the VCU Libraries to support degrees and courses are examined only as part of periodic program accreditations. Degree and course proposal review reports ordinarily do not include language that addresses future contingencies.

#### Involvement of faculty and students

The Compliance Certification report describes the role of the VCU Libraries Advisory Committee (<http://www.library.vcu.edu/admin/fac/>), which meets monthly. In addition, two VCU schools have internal faculty library committees, elected by each school's faculty, to review issues important to faculty and students in those schools: the College of Humanities and Sciences Library Committee and the School of the Arts Library Committee. The University Librarian attends the monthly meetings of these committees, along with other staff as appropriate. The VCU Libraries extends logistical support to all three committees, helps to develop agendas, schedules meetings, and records minutes. [Sample agendas](#) and [minutes](#) for these meetings will be available in the Resource Room.

In addition to these formal faculty committees, virtually every academic department has a faculty liaison to the VCU Libraries for matters related to collection development. The Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences maintains a formal school liaison program in addition to departmental liaisons. The University Librarian attends regular meetings of the Council of Deans, University Council, and the University Council Academic Affairs Committee as an *ex officio* member. The University Librarian also is a full member of the Provost's Cabinet, Research Advisory Committee, the Equity and Diversity Committee, the University Information Technology Advisory Committee, and the Information Technology Coordinating Committee, among others. Matters concerning the VCU Libraries are raised regularly by University leadership and faculty in these meetings. The University Librarian, along with the Associate University Librarian

for Public Services, presents a library report each semester to the Academic Campus Student Government Association Senate, and, with the Director of the Tompkins-McCaw Library for the Health Sciences, to the MCV Campus Student Government Association Senate.

The VCU Libraries arranges for formal faculty and student input and participation on an *ad hoc* basis as required. For example, faculty members of the three library advisory committees are invited to all presentations by candidates for faculty positions in the VCU Libraries, and their feedback on candidates is solicited. During its review of integrated library system software for a new library automation system, the VCU Libraries invited members of the library committees to vendor presentations and provided a special web page on the process for the VCU community. The VCU Libraries works closely with faculty in serial cancellations, consulting directly with faculty on specific cuts and soliciting broad faculty review of subscriptions identified for possible cancellation via broadcast email and web pages for this purpose. The selection of a coffee vendor for the Java901 and Skull & Beans coffee cafés included a taste test of products from several vendors. The taste test was open to all students, staff, and faculty and provided a formal feedback mechanism for testers. The names of both coffee cafés were selected through a naming contest open to the entire VCU community. Other examples of faculty and student *ad hoc* involvement, including periodic surveys for various purposes, are available.

### Electronic Links

Core Requirement 9:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CR\\_9.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CR_9.pdf)

Count of Programs and Courses Reviewed:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/program\\_review.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/program_review.pdf)

New Program Review Policy:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/new\\_program\\_review.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/new_program_review.pdf)

Sample Course Review Forms:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/sample\\_forms.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/sample_forms.pdf)

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee:

<http://www.library.vcu.edu/admin/fac/>

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee Sample Agendas:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/sample\\_agendas.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/sample_agendas.pdf)

VCU Libraries Advisory Committee Sample Minutes:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/sample\\_minutes.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/sample_minutes.pdf)

## Core Requirement 11

The Off-site Review Committee noted that the official audit report for 2002-03 was not submitted with Compliance Certification and that it should be provided when available. In addition, the Off-site Review Committee wanted to know about how the reductions in funds have been accomplished without compromising services. It was not clear to the Committee from the budget update (May 2003) as to how the reductions had been accommodated and how additional reductions will be reflected in University operations as well as how the reduced budget will support the University's mission and goals. The Off-site Review Committee requested VCU to demonstrate that the current budget supports the mission of the University, identify where cutbacks were made and how they impact programs and services, and discuss the rationale used for any phase-outs and reductions.

The official audit report for 2002-03 will be available in late January 2004 and will be forwarded at that time to the On-site Review Committee. The preliminary draft report submitted to the University by state auditors contains no items of concern. The auditors indicated that all financial statements were in order and that there were no material weaknesses or instances of noncompliance.

The following discussion pertains to the other areas of concern raised by the Off-site Review Committee.

Prior to the most recent round of budget reductions, Virginia's economy experienced a downturn in the early 1990s, resulting in state funding cuts for public higher education institutions and other state agencies. In 1989-90, state funding for the University was about \$7,464 per full-time equivalent resident student in actual dollars, which dropped to \$6,555 by 1993-94. Beginning in 1994-95, the economy improved and the University saw moderate growth in its level of general fund support over the next six years. By 2000-01, the full-time equivalent funding level for a resident student reached a high point of \$10,598.

Some of the growth in general fund support over this time period was related to a state-imposed rollback in tuition rates. In 1999-2000, the Governor and the General Assembly required all public higher education institutions to reduce tuition rates for resident undergraduate students by 20%. The reduction in tuition revenue, however, was offset by a dollar-for-dollar increase in state general fund support. As a result, the tuition rollback had no impact on an institution's bottom line but changed the mix between state tax support and tuition in each institution's revenue budget.

For the most recent budget reductions, the University experienced two rounds of state general fund budget cuts affecting fiscal years 2002-03 and 2003-04. The first round came out of the Governor's 2002-04 recommended budget as modified by the 2002 session of the state legislature. The second round of

reductions was announced by the Governor in October 2002 in response to a continuing weak economy and lagging state general fund revenue collections.

Following the state cuts in the 2002-04 biennium, the funding level for full-time equivalent resident students at VCU dropped from \$10,598 in 2000-01 to \$7,351 in 2003-04 in actual dollars. The combination of general fund cuts and increases in tuition rates resulted in a shift in the composition of the University's revenue budget. In 2001-02, general funds represented 63% of VCU's E&G revenue budget while tuition and fees were about 32%. By 2003-04, general funds dropped to 47% and tuition and fees increased to 44% of the E&G revenue budget.

Overall, the University's approach to addressing the 2002-04 funding reductions was to minimize internal budget reductions to the extent possible by increasing student tuition within state guidelines for tuition increases. Through tuition increases and various reductions, the University not only was able to meet the state general fund reduction requirement but also was able to address unavoidable cost increases, prior commitments, an increase in student financial aid, some new initiatives, and restoration of some previous budget reductions. The University is also utilizing tools such as the Faculty Alternative Severance Option Program and the Faculty Early Retirement Incentive Program to generate budget savings to meet reduction and restructuring requirements.

As a percent of budget, reductions in the University's Finance and Administration executive level and other administrative areas of the University were greater than those to academic areas. In addition, during the first round of 2002-04 state reductions, in order to offset the impact of higher first-year reductions, a total of \$1.2 million was reallocated among the two academic executive levels and the Finance and Administration executive level; of the \$1.2 million in funding, \$1.0 million went back to the two academic areas for adjunct and collateral faculty, library acquisitions, and other instruction-related programming.

A substantial majority of the University's budget is in the three executive levels of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Health Sciences, and Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration. The budget reduction strategy in the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs executive level was to mitigate the impact of the cuts on core programs and services and on instruction. Schools and units were instructed to preserve the instructional mission and its quality to ensure that classes for freshmen and seniors were maintained at maximum capacity and to protect essential faculty and staff jobs. While each school's and unit's reduction plan was developed individually and was unique, many reduction strategies were similar across the executive level. Where possible, reductions were made first in administration rather than instruction in order to restructure programs and services and to eliminate nonessential programs and services.

The reduction strategy for the Vice President for Health Sciences executive level was to minimize the impact on schools that could not absorb significant reductions without adversely impacting their instructional missions. Targeted reductions were selectively lowered for the School of Allied Health Professions and the School of Nursing in order to protect instructional faculty positions. To meet the overall executive level reduction target, the balance of the target for these two schools was allocated to other schools based on plans developed by each school. For the executive level as a whole, short-term reduction strategies focused on reducing operating costs and delaying the filling of vacant faculty and staff positions. Permanent reductions were achieved by administrative and instructional reorganization, which included the elimination or consolidation of faculty and staff positions.

In the Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration executive level, selective budget reduction targets were used in recognition of the priority given to the areas of safety and facilities. Loss of staff and other resources somewhat affected the ability of Finance and Administration units to support faculty and staff customers. Examples of service reductions include eliminating free employee flu shots, closing satellite (decentralized) cashier offices, eliminating courier service between campuses, and reducing mail center hours. In many cases, efficiencies and the use of technology are being explored to help offset the effect of the cuts. Reductions in Facilities Management are especially difficult when coupled with reductions in the state's general fund facilities maintenance reserve funding (not part of the University's budget). Housekeeping services were privatized in 2002-03, resulting in an annual savings of \$647,000. Facilities Management has had to make major changes in cleaning services but, to the extent possible, has preserved the cleaning of classrooms and restrooms while cutting back on the frequency of cleaning administrative space.

More specifically, the reduction requirement was met internally through a number of strategies used to manage the reduction without affecting the University's basic missions, including core instructional programs. Examples of strategies used to meet the reduction requirement include:

Increase tuition. The University met the state reduction requirement to the extent possible by increasing tuition. The tuition increases for 2002-03 and 2003-04 are summarized below.

Resident Undergraduate	Non-Resident Undergraduate	Resident Graduate	Non-Resident Graduate
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2002-03 increase	8.0%	9.0%	9.0%	9.0%
2002-03 mid-year increase	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
2003-04 increase after annualization of 2002-03 mid-year increase	8.6%	11.3%	10.7%	11.3%

Hold positions vacant or eliminate positions. Several units are dealing with the reductions, in part, by holding vacant, or eliminating, faculty and staff positions and by canceling or postponing new faculty searches. Although every effort is being made to continue to offer core instructional course offerings, the impact of holding positions vacant or eliminating positions, in general, is as follows.

- Increased class sizes
- Increased teaching and advising workload on remaining faculty
- Increased use of adjunct faculty
- Reduced non-core course offerings in selected areas
- Reduced offering of elective courses
- Service reductions and delays due to planned elimination of 83 positions either through layoffs or not filling positions in the Finance and Administration executive level

Reduce non-essential expenditures. To absorb a portion of the reduction, several units are reducing non-essential expenditures such as travel expenses, non-essential equipment purchases, mailing services, publications printing, supplies and materials, and other operating expenses. In some cases, start-up packages for new faculty are being extended over a longer period of time. The School of Social Work temporarily reduced compensation for its part-time field liaison positions by 50% for the Spring 2003 semester and for the 2003-04 academic year.

Restructure academic and administrative units. The College of Humanities and Sciences replaced six traditional departments with two new schools, thus reducing administrative costs. The six departments were replaced by the School of Government and Public Affairs and the School of World Studies. The School of Education centralized school-wide administrative and student services functions and eliminated two full-time division administrators by moving these positions to the departmental level. The School of Graduate Studies eliminated two admissions positions and replaced them with three graduate assistant appointments. The Office of Academic Technology merged its separate technology support operations on the University's two campuses, thus eliminating redundant services. Academic Technology also eliminated its distance education support program.

Adjust staff assignments and share staff. Some units are restructuring faculty and staff workload assignments to share workload across programs and departments as a result of staff vacancies or position eliminations.

Phase out selected courses and programs with low enrollment. The Office of Community Programs eliminated the offering of off-campus courses if they had a recent trend of low enrollment. The School of Dentistry is phasing out its graduate prosthodontics program over three years; program faculty who are retiring will not be replaced.

Delay or modify plans for program changes. For the time being, the School of Pharmacy has suspended plans to expand its Doctor of Pharmacy program in Northern Virginia. Also, the School of Pharmacy has modified its involvement with the Sentara Health System for making pharmacy student clerkship assignments, and the School has delayed program expansion in the area of pharmacy continuing education, particularly in the area of pharmacy certificate program development.

Use more technology in instruction and academic support services. The School of Business reduced the use of adjunct faculty in its one-credit Information Systems 160 series computer literacy courses by converting course formats to computer-based self-study. In the School of Dentistry, computer simulation labs will replace the traditional pre-clinical student labs, and fewer full-time faculty will be needed to staff the computer simulation labs. The School of Medicine is in the process of integrating more technology into its instructional programs as well as revamping the curriculum in selected programs. The Office of Community Programs cut back on printed publications and is relying more heavily on its web site to promote programs and courses. The School of Graduate Studies limited the number of printed graduate bulletins by copying them to compact disk for distribution, and the same material can be downloaded from the School's web site. Also, the School is increasingly relying on e-mail rather than traditional mail to respond to prospective applicants and other requests for information.

Reduce programs that are 100% state-funded. In order to minimize the effect of budget reductions on core instructional activities, no programs were exempted from internal budget reduction requirements, including programs that are 100% state-funded through special provisions in the State Appropriation Act. For example, the School of Medicine's state-funded Family Practice Residency Training Program for post-MD family practice residency training was substantially reduced, and the state-funded Center for the Advancement of Generalist Medicine was eliminated.

Charge fees for existing services and increase existing fees. In some cases, units have instituted user fees and charges for existing services to offset a portion of their budget reduction requirements. Examples include a new clinical course fee for graduate clinical courses in the School of Nursing, the initiation of special course fees in the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry, the institution of a

library fee for off-campus students, and initiation of charges for employee flu shots. In other cases, existing fees have been increased to offset a portion of the reduction. The School of the Arts increased its comprehensive fee for Arts majors and used the revenue to hire adjunct faculty to maintain a minimum number of course sections and appropriate student/faculty ratios.

Place relatively higher priority on protecting public safety and facilities programs in general administrative support areas. In the Finance and Administration executive level, targeted reductions were relatively larger in the areas of Administrative Information Technology, Budget and Controller, Business Services and Treasurer, and Human Resources, in order to provide some relative relief to the Police and Security and Facilities Management units.

### Electronic Links

Core Requirement 11:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CR11.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CR11.pdf)

## **COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS**

### **Institutional Mission, Governance, and Effectiveness**

#### **Comprehensive Standard 2**

The Off-site Review Committee wanted to confirm the President was evaluated annually and what role the Board of Visitors has relative to that annual evaluation.

Section 4.06(c) of the [Board of Visitors Bylaws](#) states that “An evaluation of the performance of the President of the University shall be made no less frequently than every three years.” In addition, “At least once every five years, the evaluation of the President shall be conducted in greater depth...and may involve the services of outside consultants if deemed advisable by the Board.” The Board uses the [“Presidential Evaluation Procedure”](#) that has been in effect for several years. This Procedure requires that an annual evaluation will be conducted each year. The in-depth evaluation, according to the Procedure, will be conducted every three years. Thus, the Presidential Evaluation Procedure stipulates a more stringent evaluation timeline than the one stated in the Board’s Bylaws.

The Presidential Evaluation Procedure begins in September of each year with the Rector, in consultation with the Board of Visitors, appointing a Chair and members of the Presidential Evaluation Committee. A copy of the *Annual Goals and Accomplishments of Virginia Commonwealth University* and evaluation

letters are distributed to the President's reviewers requesting their rating of the President's performance by a specified deadline. [Evaluation forms](#) are posted on the VCU web, and each reviewer is given a pass code to access the form.

The reviewers include:

- Each member of the Board of Visitors
- Vice Presidents and executive staff (Director of Athletics, Executive Director of Audit and Management Services and General Council) who report directly to the President
- Faculty Senate President
- Student Government Association Presidents (Academic Campus and VCU Medical Campus)
- VCU Real Estate Foundation and MCV Foundation Presidents

(For the more in-depth evaluation conducted every three years, the Staff Senate President, the members of the VCU Health System Board and the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park Authority Board, Deans, faculty, and directors of VCU's institutes and centers are included.)

After the on-line evaluation forms have been completed and submitted, a staff member from Academic Technology tallies the reviewers' scores and sends them to the Executive Director of Audit and Management Services. The Executive Director prepares a report, which is provided to the Presidential Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee meets to review and discuss the President's evaluation. The Committee's report is then included as an [agenda](#) item for the November Board meeting. The Chair of the Committee reports on the evaluation to the full Board and then meets with the President. The Chair then prepares a final letter summarizing the evaluation and the Board's recommendations. The evaluation letter is co-signed by the Rector of the Board.

### Electronic Links

Comprehensive Standard 2:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS2\\_ADM.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS2_ADM.pdf)

VCU Board of Visitors Bylaws:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Board\\_of\\_Visitors\\_Bylaws.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Board_of_Visitors_Bylaws.pdf)

Presidential Evaluation Procedure:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Presidential\\_Evaluation\\_Procedure.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Presidential_Evaluation_Procedure.pdf)

Evaluation Forms:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/EVAFORM2003blank.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/EVAFORM2003blank.pdf)

Board of Visitors November 2003 Agenda:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/BOV\\_agenda\\_1103.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/BOV_agenda_1103.pdf)

## **Comprehensive Standard 6**

The Off-site Review Committee expressed its desire to see some documentation that only the Governor of Virginia can dismiss members of the Board of Visitors for cause and by due process.

As noted in the original Compliance Certification narrative, according to [§ 23-50.6](#) of the Code of Virginia, all members of the VCU Board of Visitors are appointed by the Governor with subsequent approval by the General Assembly. Effective October 1, 2001, [§ 2.2-108](#) specifically gives the Governor the power to remove members of certain boards, commissions, etc. In part this section of the Code of Virginia gives the Governor power to “remove from office for malfeasance, misfeasance, incompetence, or gross neglect of duty any member of the board of any public institution of higher education.” In addition, the Code provides that the Governor “shall set forth in a written public statement his reasons for removing any member pursuant to this section at the time the removal occurs.” Finally, the “Governor shall be the sole judge of the sufficiency of the cause for removal....”

### **Electronic Links**

Comprehensive Standard 6:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS\\_6.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS_6.pdf)

Code of Virginia: §23-50.6 Appointment, terms, etc., of board of visitors,....:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+23-50.6>

Code of Virginia: §2.2-108 Removal of members of certain boards, commissions, etc.:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+2.2-108>

## **Comprehensive Standard 11**

Again, the Off-site Review Committee wanted confirmation that the President was included in the annual evaluation of administrators.

The annual evaluation process was described above in Comprehensive Standard 2.

### **Electronic Links**

Comprehensive Standard 11:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS11\\_ADM.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS11_ADM.pdf)

## Comprehensive Standard 16

The Off-Site Review Committee raised issues about both current and past institutional effectiveness reporting at the University.

The committee asked that VCU provide a final/full display of 2002-03 entries for the 331 academic programs and administrative and education support services tracked in *WEAVEonline™*, the web-based online assessment management system developed by the University. Archiving for 2002-03 findings and action planning occurred in early January 2004; reviewers can access these final entries through the documentation in this special read-only web site: [www.weave.vcu.edu/sacs](http://www.weave.vcu.edu/sacs). [A separate sheet describing access procedures is included in the cover letter to reviewers.] The entries represent a rich array of practice, conveyed in the words of the people responsible for the everyday work of the University.

It is important to point out that *WEAVEonline™* represents a substantial commitment by VCU to the process of assuring institutional effectiveness and a major step forward in centralized accountability monitoring. Prior to its development, VCU academic programs and administrative and educational support services kept their own records and counsel regarding mission-driven quality assurance activities.

*WEAVEonline™* has changed not only reporting, but also monitoring, collaboration, and practice. Now, the University has the capability of monitoring where individual areas are in the assessment cycle, of suggesting cooperative conversations about assessment practice (e.g., a community of practice around portfolios), and of opening administrative, learning, and service outcomes measurement and achievement to internal and external peer review. For example, members of VCU's Assessment Council and other faculty and staff conducted a "rapid review" of all 331 units in 2003, giving specific feedback to encourage units in enhancing their assessment practices. *WEAVEonline™* includes every academic program and administrative and educational support service at the University. Continuing quality improvement has a new, powerful, comprehensive tool.

Since *WEAVEonline™* is a recent development, it is more difficult to adequately capture what happened in prior years. The Director of Assessment requested assessment summaries from all major areas of the University for 1998-99 through 2000-01. What follows are sample excerpts from one academic area on each campus.

The College of Humanities & Sciences cited a number of examples of how its program review process and assessment went hand-in-hand to assure closing of the IE loop. Among the program improvements cited were a decrease of English

use in foreign language classes, improved career planning and advising in Biology, the establishment of a capital semester internship program in Political Science, and an increase in coherence in the graduate curriculum in History. The program review report from Urban Studies & Planning reveals a best-practice example:

“Each May, the faculty holds a three-hour meeting to discuss the assessment results for either its Urban Studies or its Urban and Regional Planning program. Student representatives are always invited to these meetings to provide their perspectives on the data that we have collected (students see the data in aggregate form). In the course of these meetings faculty identify shortcomings in specific courses (individual faculty performance is not discussed; we focus on course content coverage), as well as issues that cut across the entire curriculum. Over the past decade, we have made numerous revisions to course content and pedagogical techniques as a result of the outcomes-assessment process. For example, we added writing assignments in all of our courses and developed a department-wide writing assignment checklist...to provide students with more consistent feedback on their writing.”

A VCU Medical Center campus report stated:

“All of the programs in the School of Allied Health Professions have mechanisms for ongoing and systematic review that include a variety of survey and evaluation instruments to obtain feedback from a combination of students, alumni, faculty, employers, exit interviews, comprehensive exams, state and national certification and/or licensure exams, and external accreditation reviews. Each department utilizes a number of these instruments and incorporates results into programmatic or curricular change.”

Examples of such change include greater emphases on molecular diagnostics, component therapy, morphology, problem solving, and “professional behaviors” in Clinical Laboratory Sciences; additional interviewing practice, work in health care teams, and web-based learning modules in Gerontology; strengthening of statistical expertise in Health Sciences Ph.D. graduates; use of an established program of modeling by faculty for pastoral care residents in Patient Counseling; and convening of an orthopedic advisory group for enhancement of joint mobilization instruction and introduction of debridement on pigs feet to train students in psychomotor skills related to wound management in Physical Therapy.

The following are two sample assessment summaries for administrative and educational support areas. VCU Libraries cited seven assessment activities: survey of distance education users, VCU faculty journal preference survey, journal collection assessment (by faculty), student survey on use of Tompkins-

McCaw Library (TML) (the library on the VCU Medical Center campus), new course/program [resource assessment] proposals, VCU Libraries web redesign [use data analysis], and three separate advisory committees. Based on findings from these assessment activities, VCU Libraries developed ongoing conversations with distance education faculty; created a list of 2074 journal titles important for undergraduate teaching; established criteria for journal collection assessment; added to the collections to support course/program changes; designed new web pages; and renovated TML to improve user space.

The Finance and Administration Division submitted representative examples for five of its units. Based on student satisfaction telephone survey findings, University Dining Services replaced its previous single food outlet concept with eight food outlet locations, introduced a late-night dining hours program, and installed a food court in the new VCU Medical Center Gateway Building. The result was improvement in user survey scores in three key areas: overall satisfaction, cleanliness of facilities, and variety of food. Similarly, University Parking and Transportation Services made changes in the Campus Connector shuttle bus service after the telephone survey, contracting with a small, local, privately owned transportation carrier; this change allowed VCU to customize routes and have buses load and discharge passengers at more convenient stops. Facilities Management used its annual customer (building manager) survey to train “physical plant zone technicians” on improving customer relations; results of the effort from 1997 to 2000 showed significant improvements in the areas of reliability, confidence, appearance, responsiveness, and understanding. The VCU Police Department sent a one-page survey form to every fifth person from whom a VCU police officer took a crime report; “we have used the survey data to augment our community policing programs to highlight building partnerships on and off campus, problem solving among diverse groups on campus, and crime prevention. The result has been that VCU rates as one of the safest universities in the State of Virginia.” Human Resources focused on its introduction of Employee Self Service (ESS), a web-based, password-protected system developed by Administrative Information Technology’s Human Resource System. ESS achieved service-oriented efficiencies for customers and workload efficiencies for HR; during a seven-month monitoring period, ESS recorded over 47,000 employee sign-ons for such transactions as updating personal data and accessing pay and leave information.

These are only examples, and it is fair to say that attention to assessment was uneven across units. At the suggestion of SACS Liaison to VCU, VCU is preparing a representative sample of actual assessments done from 1998-99 through 2000-01. Files from a 10% sample of academic programs and AES units during that time period will be available in the resource room for the On-Site Review Committee.

### Electronic Links

Comprehensive Standard 16:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS16\\_ADM.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS16_ADM.pdf)

Read-only *WEAVEonline*<sup>TM</sup>:

[www.weave.vcu.edu/sacs](http://www.weave.vcu.edu/sacs)

## **Programs**

### **Comprehensive Standard 1**

The Focused Report section on Comprehensive Standard 16 (Institutional Effectiveness) directly above fully addresses the program and learning outcome assessment concerns raised by the Off-Site Review Committee.

#### **Electronic Links**

Comprehensive Standard 1:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS\\_1.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS_1.pdf)

### **Comprehensive Standard 20**

The Off-site Review Team expressed its desire for additional information on the training, supervision, and evaluation of graduate teaching assistants.

As noted in the original Compliance Certification narrative, VCU conducted an extensive review of faculty appointments and teaching assignments. Regarding Graduate Teaching Assistants, the Compliance Certification narrative stated:

Generally, VCU limits the use of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) as primary instructors. Most GTAs teach in laboratory or “breakout” sections. These courses are coordinated by a senior faculty member in the relevant departments. Course content, outlines, materials, etc., are the responsibility of the full-time faculty member. GTAs provide face-to-face classroom interactions. GTAs are supervised, supported, and evaluated by the full-time course coordinators.

After the Off-site Review Committee’s comments, each school was asked to review the GTAs reported on the Roster of Instructional Staff included in the Compliance Certification Report and to provide descriptions of how these students were trained, supervised, and evaluated. Materials provided by the schools show they met the guideline recommendations for GTA training, supervision, and evaluation described in this comprehensive standard.

Summaries of the GTA supervision, training, and evaluation techniques and activities employed at VCU are presented below.

Common supervision and training practices across the College and schools include departmental orientations, regular supervision and mentoring by senior faculty advisors, co-teaching with department faculty, departmental teaching seminars (e.g., GRAD 602 –Seminar in College Teaching in the School of Business, or ENGL 636 – Teaching Writing in the English Department), beginning-of-semester workshops on presentations, testing, and class management skills, weekly “in-service” group training and review sessions, and training in the use of technology in the classroom. Special training on classroom safety is provided for lab course graduate assistants.

In addition to school and departmental training activities summarized above, the University provides support for graduate student training through programs such as:

- [Center for Teaching Excellence](#)
- [VCU Preparing Future Faculty initiatives](#)

Common evaluation practices include regular feedback from faculty supervisors and mentors, end-of-semester evaluations by faculty supervisors and/or faculty mentors, student evaluations of teaching results, class visits by faculty, program directors, and/or department chairs, and critiques of student work displays or performances. Departments also offer remediation to address teaching issues identified by evaluations.

Examples of these materials will be available in the resource room for review by the On-site Review Committee.

### Electronic Links

Comprehensive Standard 20:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS\\_20.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS_20.pdf)

Center for Teaching Excellence:

<http://www.vcu.edu/cte/aboutus.html>

Preparing Future Faculty Initiatives:

<http://www.vcu.edu/pffp>

### Comprehensive Standard 25

Concerns raised about the VCU Libraries by the Off-Site Review Committee in this section are identical to those raised in Core Requirement 9. The Focus

Report section on Core Requirement 9 fully addresses library concerns raised by the Off-Site Review Committee in Comprehensive Standard 25.

#### Electronic Links

Comprehensive Standard 25:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS25\\_PROG.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS25_PROG.pdf)

### **Financial and Physical Resources**

#### Comprehensive Standard 1

VCU was found not in compliance with this standard as the 2002-03 audit was not submitted.

As noted in Core Requirement 11, the 2002-03 audit will be available in late January and will be forwarded to SACS and the On-site Review Committee at that time.

#### Electronic Links

Comprehensive Standard 1:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS1\\_FIN.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS1_FIN.pdf)

#### Comprehensive Standard 2

The Off-site Review Committee inquired about the full implication of funding the President's initiatives, especially in light of budget cutbacks. The Committee was interested in seeing the budgetary numbers that support growth and development of the self-sufficiency initiatives' six points, specifically with more detail on sponsored research and implications for instruction.

The following narrative describes in detail information related to the funding of the President's self-sufficiency initiatives.

In recognition of continuing uncertainty in state funding support, the University's President has adopted a prescription for self-help to ensure the University's financial health. This framework is not aimed at financing any particular aspect or aspects of the University's mission but, to the extent possible, is aimed at enhancing the University's overall financial stability.

The President's self-sufficiency initiative includes:

- Increasing tuition
- Focusing on out-of-state student recruitment

- Increasing research funding with a goal of achieving at least \$200 million per year in external support
- Attaining higher levels of private giving
- Pursuing entrepreneurial initiatives
- Achieving operational efficiencies and enhancing the environment for students, faculty and staff

The University's 2003-04 budget specifically supports the President's self-sufficiency initiative. Tuition increases have been used to partially offset declines in state support, and tuition increase amounts were consistent with State Appropriation Act requirements for resident undergraduate students and with actions taken by other Virginia institutions of higher education. In addition, several graduate programs implemented *market-based tuition rates* in 2003-04, including the first professional programs in medicine and pharmacy and the nurse anesthesia program. Incremental tuition revenue generated above the University's general tuition planning assumptions is returned to these programs to support high priority needs. The School of Dentistry entered into a tuition targeting agreement with the University beginning in 2003-04 whereby the school retains incremental tuition revenue generated above a University revenue target. Excess revenue retained by the school may come from enhanced tuition rates, changes in student residency mix, or a combination of both.

The focus on out-of-state student recruitment also continued over the 2002-04 biennium. Under the University's non-resident student enrollment initiative, a school is able to retain 70% of the difference between resident and non-resident tuition rates based on actual growth in the school's non-resident enrollment. The schools use the additional funding to address school and instructional program priorities. In 2001-02, school allocations under this plan totaled \$1.4 million. By 2003-04, total tuition revenue returned to the schools is estimated at \$4.2 million, or an increase of \$2.8 million.

The University's level of sponsored programs activity continues to realize significant growth. Over the past two years, total research funding has increased by 36%, with an increase in indirect cost recovery revenue of 30%. The additional indirect cost recovery revenue is being used to support research activity, especially through the Vice President for Research's research pool. For 2003-04, it is estimated that research awards will reach \$180 million. Sponsored research is also a key component of the University's core mission.

In the area of private giving, the University's current major initiative is the "Campaign for VCU," which runs from July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2007, with a goal of \$330 million. Through November 30, 2003, the Campaign has achieved \$171.6 million, or 52% of its goal. Campaign initiatives have a wide-ranging appeal, as University long-range goals complement the economic development of the metropolitan Richmond area. Development officers within the schools and other units, as well as central Vice President for Advancement staff, continue to focus on cultivation and solicitation of major gift prospects as a major component

of private giving support. An increased number of proposals to national corporations and foundations have been submitted and funded, thus increasing private giving from this source. In addition, in an effort to increase giving and participation, the Annual Fund campaign will focus on recruitment of undergraduates as members of the VCU Alumni Association, with solicitation strategies focusing on department-level needs rather than just at the school level.

Beginning in 2003-04, several schools implemented entrepreneurial tuition agreements to provide additional instructional operating budget support. These efforts include the initiation of an off-campus Master of Science degree program in computer science through the School of Engineering, the establishment of nursing clinical course fees, the initiation of special course fees in the schools of Medicine and Dentistry, and the institution of a library fee for off-campus students. In each of these examples, the school or program retains all new revenue associated with the establishment of the fee or program. Beginning prior to 2003-04, a major on-going entrepreneurial initiative has been the School of the Arts undergraduate Design Arts program in the country of Qatar, which is fully self-supporting.

Operational efficiencies continue to be made, and the 2003-04 budget includes several new initiatives, in both the Educational and General and Auxiliary Enterprise budgets, to enhance the environment for University students, faculty and staff. In the area of operational efficiencies, the University is implementing automated, web-based faculty and classified job applicant tracking systems, which will reduce manual paper review processing and manual record keeping. The University has implemented a web-based, secure-access employee information and transactions system for employees and managers, which has enabled the University to eliminate thousands of annual paper-based transactions to achieve service-oriented efficiencies from automation by streamlining work processes and supporting on-line customer access. Over the past few years the University has been implementing an ongoing effort to identify manual administrative support processes for electronic automation. The University identified 94 key administrative processes for automation and, through 2002-03, now supports 74 of the 94 processes in whole or in part electronically, including internal budget change transactions and internal financial system inquiries.

Examples of initiatives to improve the environment for students, faculty and staff include the following:

- enhanced Internet connections and network support for students living in University housing;
- state-of-the-art student computer labs throughout the University;
- student web server;
- telecommunications equipment upgrades;
- improved meal plan offerings;
- increases in student activity/student government fees to support enhanced programming as requested by students;

- faculty training opportunities offered by Academic Technology, such as Faculty Mentoring Program and Winter and Spring Institutes;
- pilot Faculty Computer Initiatives to support adjunct faculty.

### Electronic Links

Comprehensive Standard 2:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/CS2\\_FIN.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/CS2_FIN.pdf)

## **FEDERAL MANDATES**

### Federal Mandate 1

The Off-site Committee requested more detail on the results of licensing exams.

As reported in Federal Mandate 1 in the Compliance Certification, several schools track student achievement through their departmental programs based on the results of state and national licensing exams. Several of these schools have included license pass-rates as part of their assessment efforts reported in *WEAVEonline™*. Other schools track the pass rates on licensure exams for inclusion in their accrediting reports. The use of the data varies by school or program. Data for most programs for 2003 are not yet available. The following provides detailed information on available licensure pass rates for up to the past three to four years.

#### College of Humanities and Sciences

The Department of Psychology reported that surveys of alumni provide information on licensure pass rates. In the most recent survey, of alumni who answered the question regarding licensing exam results, 15 reported they passed on the first attempt, no one reported not passing on their first try, and 12 reported not having taken the exam up to that time.

#### School of Allied Health Professions

Several programs have licensure or certification exams, the results of which are detailed below.

#### Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences: (certification results)

2001: 87% passed on first attempt (78% national average)

2002: 76% passed on first attempt (76% national average)

2003: 100% passed on first attempt (84% national average)

*Department of Occupational Therapy:*

2001: 89% passed on first attempt (89% national average) (March exam)

87% passed on first attempt (86% national average) (July exam)

2002: 100% passed on first attempt (88% national average)

2003: 100% passed on first attempt (82% national average)

*Department of Physical Therapy:*

2001: 96% passed on first attempt (91% national average); 100% retake pass rate

2002: 98% passed on first attempt (89% national average); 100% retake pass rate

2003: 100% passed on first attempt (76% national average)

*Program in Patient Counseling:*

The students in this program do not sit for a license. However, they may elect to appear for certification after a few years of work. This program has had three graduates in the last three years seek certification. Two were certified as Board Certified Chaplains by the Association of Professional Chaplains on their first appearance. The third was certified as an associate supervisor by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education on first appearance and as a full supervisor on second appearance.

*Department of Gerontology:*

This program has about two persons a year seek nursing home administration licensure. Over the past three years, all have passed on first try.

*Department of Rehabilitation Counseling:*

This department reports that for students and graduates taking Certified Rehabilitation Counselor licensure exam between April 1997 and October 2001, 87% passed on first attempt (82% national average). For the period April 2001 to October 2001, more than 90% of the students and graduates passed on the first attempt (80% national average).

*Department of Radiation Sciences:*

This department reported both the pass rate for each year (2001-2003) as well as the mean scaled score for VCU students and national average for the certification exam in Radiography.

2001: VCU mean score was 82.5 (national average was 83.3); 100% passed on first attempt

2002: VCU mean score was 84.1 (national average was 83.0); 100% passed on first attempt

2003: No mean scores reported but 100% passed on first attempt

#### *Department of Nurse Anesthesia:*

This department (the Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia was ranked first by *U.S. News and World Report* in 2004) includes licensure pass rates as part of its assessment efforts reported in *WEAVEonline™*. This department reported the following pass rates on the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia National Certification Exam:

2001: 90.9% first time pass rate; 100% retake pass rate

2002: 95.6% first time pass rate; 100% retake pass rate

2003: 90.9% first time pass rate; 100% retake pass rate

#### School of Business

The Department of Accounting tracks the percentage of students passing all parts of the Uniform CPA Exam. The following percentages were reported for students passing all parts on first attempt:

1998: 25% (highest percentage compared to all other state institutions)

1999: 28.6% (second highest percentage for state institutions)

2000: 21.7% (highest percentage compared to all other state institutions)

2002: 23.1% (second highest percentage for state institutions)

#### School of Dentistry

The undergraduate program in Dental Hygiene reported the following pass rates on the Dental Hygiene National Board Examination:

2000: 100% pass rate (93.5% national average)

2001: 100% pass rate (95.4% national average)

2002: 100% pass rate (94.6% national average)

In addition, the Department of Dental Hygiene reported the Dental Hygiene Southern Regional Testing Agency Examination results:

2000: 100% pass rate (SRTA pass rate not available)

2001: 100% pass rate (100% SRTA average)

2002: 100% pass rate (98.4% SRTA average)

The School of Dentistry does not receive results for Doctor of Dental Surgery state licensure examinations directly from the testing agencies for all states

where students seek a license to practice dentistry. Based on information received from students and alumni, the licensure rates are virtually 100% for all classes. Data from the Southern Regional Testing Agency and the Western Regional Examination Board for the past three years shows a first-time pass rate of 80% or better. The pass rate following a second attempt rises to 99%. Licensure examinations for dentistry include a performance-based examination on simulated and live patients. The very nature of these examinations leads to large variation in the pass rate of candidates from examination to examination. Because of the variation in performance-based licensure examinations, the results of a single examination are not of value for program evaluation. Students who do not pass a licensure examination on the first attempt retake the examination within a few weeks and virtually all pass the second time without any further educational experiences except the experience of taking the examination the first time

The Doctor of Dental Surgery programs reports the following pass rates on the Dental National Board Examination.

Part I Exam – First attempt pass rate  
2000: 96.1% (92.5% national average)  
2001: 91.7% (93.4% national average)  
2002: 93.2% (92.7% national average)

Part II Exam – First attempt pass rate  
2000: 94.0% (94.3% national average)  
2001: 91.9% (national average not available)  
2002: 92.1% (94.3% national average)

### School of Education

Institutional pass rate data for teacher preparation majors completing the Praxis I Examination are disseminated through Title II. For 2001-2002, the VCU institutional pass rate was 90%. This rate was based on the following individual pass rates:

PPST Reading: 90%  
CBT Reading: 95%  
PPST Writing: 81%  
CBT Writing: 84%  
PPST Math: 79%  
CBT Math: 88%

### School of Medicine

To receive a license to practice medicine, students must pass all three steps of the United States Medical Licensing Exam. The first two steps can be taken in any order but both must be passed to sit for the third step. Steps 1 and 2 are taken during medical school, typically at the end of the second year and the beginning of the fourth year. Step 3 cannot be taken until after graduation, and most MD's (at that point) take it during their first year of residency. The information received from the National Board on Step 3 results is not as complete as that received on Steps 1 and 2 because the graduate must release the information to the University, presumably some choose not to do so. Scores on Steps 1 and 2 are received as pass rates for first time takers in two year blocks. The following are the pass rates as reported to the University:

May 1998-December 2000: 92% (95% national average)  
May 1999-December 2001: 98% (95% national average)  
May 2000-December 2002: 97% (95% national average)

The School of Medicine uses scores on Steps 1 and 2 for assessment purposes on *WEAVEonline™*.

#### School of Nursing

The School of Nursing tracks undergraduate program licensure examination pass rates and the graduate program certification examination pass rates. The pass rates for the School are compared on a five-year time line with Virginia Pass Rates and the National Pass Rates. In three of the six years VCU's pass rates were higher than both the state and national averages (as noted below). However, in 2000 the pass rate dropped to approximately 81%, which was very near the bottom of the benchmark. The School immediately instituted an NLN standardized testing program with mandatory remediation for students who scored less than the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile on any of a series of examinations that had demonstrated sensitivity in predicting pass rates. The pass rate for the graduates of May 2002 was 98.1%, a pass rate that exceeded both state and national rates.

1998: 95% pass rate (95% national average)  
1999: 97% pass rate (95% national average)  
2000: 95% pass rate (95% national average)

#### School of Pharmacy

The School of Pharmacy reported that over the past seven years, the pass rate for VCU pharmacy students on their licensure exams has been averaging 97%; for 2003 it was 97.8%. Based on these statistics about one to two students in graduating classes of 90+ do not pass the exam on their first try.

#### School of Social Work

The clinical licensure examination for social work can be taken after two years of post-MSW experience. Examination data from the Association of Social Work Boards is available to the institution every two years. The following pass rates were reported by the School of Social Work:

1990-1997: Intermediate Level: 98% first time pass rate (90% national average)  
1990-1997: Clinical Level: 90% first time pass rate (87% national average)  
1998: Intermediate Level: 89% first time pass rate (88% national average)  
1998: Clinical Level: 94% first time pass rate (82% national average)  
1999: Intermediate Level: 100% first time pass rate (81% national average)  
1999: Clinical Level: 90% first time pass rate (72% national average)  
2000: Intermediate Level: 95% first time pass rate (82% national average)  
2000: Clinical Level: 89% first time pass rate (71% national average)  
2001: Intermediate Level: 90% first time pass rate (79% national average)  
2001: Clinical Level: 98% first time pass rate (93% national average)

### Electronic Links

Federal Mandate 1:

[http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused\\_Report/FM\\_1.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/quality/sacs/pdf/Focused_Report/FM_1.pdf)