



**Report of Evaluation of the
Institute for Creation Research
Irving, Texas
November 8, 2007**

PREFACE

An on-site evaluation visit to the Institute for Creation Research in Irving, Texas was conducted November 8, 2007. This evaluation was done at the request of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board staff as a part of the review of the institution's Certificate of Authority application. The visiting committee consisted of David Rankin, Ph.D., Social Sciences Reference/Government Documents Librarian, Texas A & M University - Commerce; Rusty Waller, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, Texas A&M University-Commerce; Gloria White, Ed.D., Managing Director, Dana Research Center for Mathematics and Science Education, The University of Texas at Austin. Linda McDonough represented the Coordinating Board.

This report represents the observations of the visiting committee with respect to compliance with the standards outlined in Chapter 7, Section 7.9, *Private and Out-of-State Public Degree Granting Institutions Operating in Texas* as amended January 25, 2007. The report is based solely on information available in the institution's application, institutional documents, and through on-site interviews and observations at that time.

OBSERVATIONS

Standard 1: Legal Compliance

The Institution for Creation Research (ICR) was granted a letter of exemption from the Texas Workforce Commission on November 15, 2005. ICR has never been cited by a government agency for non-compliance with any law or ordinance. The public fire marshal makes regular inspections of the facilities. Hallways, emergency exits, and other spaces are clear and safe for emergency situations. Emergency evacuation plans are clearly posted within the building.

Standard 2: Qualifications of Institutional Officers

ICR is governed by a 12 member board. Board members have a wide-range of experience in the business, public, and educational sectors appropriate for the governance of the institution.

Dr. Henry Morris III serves as Chief Executive Officer of ICR and leads the day-to-day operations of the institution. Dr. Morris holds a MBA from Pepperdine University. He also holds a Doctorate of Ministry and a Doctorate of Divinity from Luther Rice Seminary, which is nationally accredited. Dr. Morris' work experience includes five years as Administrative Vice-President for Christian Heritage College in San Diego. Christian Heritage College is regionally accredited. Dr. Morris also served for seven years as a Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) Commissioner. This combination of education and experience is deemed appropriate for the CEO of the

Institution for Creation Research.

The position of Chief Financial Officer is currently vacant. Dr. Henry Morris serves as interim pending hiring for this position. He previously served in a similar capacity for Sungard Financial Systems.

Dr. John D. Morris serves as President of ICR. He holds a Ph.D. in Geological Engineering. He has experience as both Vice-President and President of ICR. Dr. Morris is deemed to hold appropriate education and experience for his position.

Dr. Eddy Miller serves as the Chief Academic Officer of ICR. Dr. Miller holds a regionally accredited Ph.D. in Human Behavior from U.S. International University (USIU) in San Diego. USIU has subsequently merged with Alliant International University. Dr. Miller holds an extensive service record with Christian Heritage University (CHU) with experience beginning in the 1970's. He spent 12 years at CHU, including 8 years as Chief Academic Officer and 3 years as President. Dr. Miller successfully led CHU through regional accreditation during his service as Chief Academic Officer.

ICR primarily utilizes a matrix approach in the leadership of planning and evaluation. The function of Institutional Research is overseen by Dr. Vardiman. Dr. Henry Morris leads the Strategic Planning Process. Dr. Morris' educational training and experience are appropriate for leading institutional planning. The senior administration of ICR has not developed institutional evaluation (Institutional Effectiveness) to an appropriate level of operation. Deficiencies are noted in Standard Seven. The matrix approach has proven virtually ineffective in documenting quality enhancement. The visiting team strongly believes that direct and appropriately trained administrative leadership must be provided in the area of Institutional Effectiveness.

Standard 3: Governing Board

ICR has a twelve-member Governing Board. The Board is an active policy-making body focused on promoting the mission of the institution. Members of the board represent the interests of both internal and external constituencies including, but not limited to, faculty, students, and donors. The Governing Board utilizes a three member Executive Committee charged with oversight of compliance issues. No member of the committee has contractual, employment, personal or familial, or financial interest in the institution. The Executive Committee reports to the full Governing Board during each of the Bi-annual meetings.

Board members serve a three year term subject to one renewal. Board members are nominated through the Executive Committee for full approval by the Governing Board.

Two members of the Governing Board hold contractual positions with ICR: Dr. John Morris and Dr. Henry Morris. These two members of the Board serve as President and Chief Operating Officer of ICR. Subsequent concerns regarding distinction of roles are identified in Standard Four.

The Board Chair provides appropriate interaction with the Chief Operating Officer. Members of the Board clearly view their role as policy makers with administration providing oversight of ICR.

Standard 4: Distinction of Roles

The ICR Governing Board functions as a policy making body. The Governing Board employees the Chief Operating Officer. The CEO oversees the full range of ICR activity. Administrative, support staff, and faculty positions report to the CEO. The CEO is evaluated by the Governing Board on an annual basis.

The distinction of roles between the Governing Board and Administration is not clearly delineated. The Chief Operating Officer and the President serve on the ICR Governing Board as full voting members. Serious questions arise as to the legitimacy of this arrangement. For example, performance appraisals of the CEO and President cannot be appropriately conducted under these conditions. The Governing Board and the Administration must be separated to maintain the proper role and distinction of each group. The site visit team strongly recommends that the CEO and President immediately discontinue serving as both members of the Governing Board and chief administrative officers. Simultaneous service in both areas is not deemed appropriate.

The role of faculty is clear in practice but not lacks formalization. Due to the small size of ICR, discussions regarding the development and modification of curriculum occur. However, a formal instructional review process is not documented. ICR would be strongly benefited by a formalized Instructional Review Process that clearly delineates the role of faculty, administration, and the Governing Board.

Standard 5: Financial Resources and Stability

ICR operates with a solid financial base. Financial reserves of the Institute are \$2,700,000 as of May 15, 2007. The 2007-08 Budget for the Institute is approximately \$7,000,000. The institution has operated in the black for the last 35 years and continues to operate free of debt.

The budget for the Texas campus is not broken out of the global budget; however, review of facilities, equipment, staff, and resources indicates the Texas campus is adequately supported. Faculty members indicate more than adequate support for the instructional offerings. Current resources clearly provide the framework for quality instruction. The salaries of faculty, staff, and administration are adequate to support the mission of ICR. The site visit team accepted the global budget in light of ICR's stated position that all institutional functions are currently being moved to the Texas facility.

Budgetary controls are appropriate for an institution of higher learning and are consistent with traditional budgetary methodologies. Fund transfers are subject to the final approval of the Governing Board if they exceed specified amounts. The Chief Operating Officer approves all fund transfers falling below the established threshold.

Standard 6: Financial Records

The financial records of ICR are kept in accordance with the guidelines in the current edition of *College and University Business Administration (Sixth Edition)*. ICR provided the audit as of June 30, 2006 conducted by Grice, Lund, and Tarkington, LLP. The audit adheres to standard expectation and found ICR to be in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. The audit identified no irregularities in practice.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

ICR participates in an extensive 5-Year Strategic Planning Process for the forward allocation of resources. Strategic Planning involves all aspects of the institution ranging from administrative functions to instructional delivery. Interviews with faculty, staff, and administration indicated broad-based involvement in the process. Minutes of meetings of the Governing Board indicate review and approval by the governance body. The Strategic Planning Process is linked to the ICR Budget.

The Institute lacks a clearly articulated evaluation process (Institutional Effectiveness Process) though a strong Strategic Planning Process is in place. ICR's Institutional Effectiveness Process was developed to conform to global expectations of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).

ICR does regularly conduct several surveys such as the student evaluation of instruction, etc. The findings of these surveys are articulated among the faculty, staff, and administration; however, program and departmental improvement efforts are not appropriately documented as is expected within a standard Institutional Effectiveness Process. Instructional programs come closer to meeting expectations than the non-instructional areas. Interviews with several non-instructional administrative leaders indicated the lack of established unit goals and evaluative criteria. The current assessment practices are clearly inadequate.

Little documented evidence was found to indicate the grass-roots development and utilization of performance goals and evaluation criterion for the systematic improvement of services and instruction across all aspects of ICR. Interviews with numerous administrators and faculty indicated that ICR is prepared to move from current practice to a process more in-line with standard expectations of grass-roots involvement in quality enhancement. The site visit team strongly stresses the need for specific and qualified administrative leadership of the Institutional Effectiveness Process.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Remediation

Admission to the proposed ICR graduate program requires a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution or a degree from a foreign institution equivalent to a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. Examination of a sample of five admitted students' files (a sample of size $N=5$ represents approximately 10% of the currently enrolled student population of 54 students) showed evidence of a consistent process of review by the ICR admissions committee (Department Chair and faculty). However, the faculty member who oversees graduate admissions, Dr. Patricia Nason, reported that ICR does not have a formal written rubric for the admissions committee to use in their review process. Their stated criteria for admissions included a combined minimum score of 1000 on the GRE verbal and mathematics section, a minimum of a 3.00 GPA in undergraduate science courses taken, and evidence of good writing skills. Dr. Nason indicated that they recognize they should put in writing their stated criteria so that internally there can be greater clarity and consistency about their admissions process, and she indicated she would prepare a written version of their criteria.

Applicants with weak writing skills may be admitted on a conditional basis with the requirement that they take additional undergraduate coursework at another college or university recommended in advance by the faculty. ICR could benefit from having a

formal written rubric for use in their admissions process, particularly since they anticipate substantial growth in the number of applicants. The faculty members and the chief academic officer at ICR indicated that the academic strength of their applicant pool had been increasing in recent years, so that the number of incoming students needing leveling courses and/or improvement in writing skills was quite small. While most students typically are expected to take a minimum 2 online courses per academic year in order to complete their studies in a timely fashion, students who need to take additional coursework to address weaknesses will obviously need more time to complete their program.

The documents in the student folders reviewed by the site visit team confirmed that the institution did require proof (official transcripts) from accredited institutions of the students' undergraduate degrees. In like manner, the institution did require proof (official transcripts) of equivalency of a baccalaureate degree for students who were admitted with foreign degrees, consistent with the guidelines of the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Education Credentials.

Their currently enrolled student population is approximately 67% male and 33% female, and range in age from 29 to 68; the vast majority of these students are employed full-time. When I inquired about the racial/ethnic composition of their student population, Dr. Nason indicated that they currently did not collect that information about their students; however, she indicated that of their 54 students, "several were black and Hispanic." At the beginning of the site visit, their leadership team indicated that they were aware of the state's long-range plan for higher education and that they are supportive of 'Closing the Gaps by 2015.'

Standard 9: Faculty Qualifications and Standard 10: Faculty Size

A review of the vita of the full-time teaching faculty by the site visit team indicated that the faculty's credentials are appropriate. The terminal degrees held by their faculty are doctoral degrees in their teaching fields, and their doctoral degrees are from generally well-regarded mid-size to large universities. The collective vitas of these faculty members would be comparable to the collective vitas of the professoriate at regional state colleges and many of the regional universities in Texas. It is fair to say that the education, experience, and characteristics of the ICR faculty in higher education are such that one may reasonably conclude that students will receive an education consistent with the objectives of the proposed master's degree from ICR. In addition, the ICR faculty consistently stressed to the site visit team that they always include in their courses multiple perspectives on the science topics presented. In particular, they explained in detail how they provide not only the "creationist" perspective but also the "more typical secular" perspectives on the science topics covered in their courses. (Please refer to sections 11 and 12 of this report for further related information on the faculty.)

The organizational chart of ICR shows a total of 8 individuals who are identified as teaching faculty. However, included in the group of 8 individuals listed as faculty is a part-time librarian (L. Meyer), a registrar (L. Kreige), the chief academic officer/provost (E. Miller), and the chief executive officer (H. Morris III). These individuals should not be counted as full-time teaching faculty for purposes of determining approximate faculty-to-student ratios.

It is more appropriate to use a total of 4 full-time teaching faculty for determining approximate faculty-to-student ratios at this institution. Therefore, a general approximation for ICR's faculty-to-student ratio would be 4-to-54, or the equivalent of about 1-to-13.5. The CEO of the institution reported that they expect up to 4 additional full-time faculty to relocate in the coming year from their California campus (which ICR is closing) to their Texas campus, bringing their faculty total to 12 (4 part-time faculty, and 8 full-time teaching faculty). However, there is no guarantee that all 4 of the California faculty associated with ICR will actually make the move.

Regarding the typical faculty workload at ICR, it varies from a minimum of at least one course per year to an average of two to three courses per year. The CEO and provost explained that ICR intentionally keeps the teaching load relatively light in order to encourage faculty to conduct research, publish, accept speaking engagements, advise students, and assist with institutional advancement (i.e., fund-raising). Typical class sizes for existing courses taught at ICR vary, from as small as one student in a course to about 6-8 students in most courses.

In discussing with the full-time teaching faculty their view of their salaries and support at ICR, all four indicated that they felt very well compensated and supported. In fact, the faculty reported that they make more (some said much more) than their peers in Texas public and private institutions of higher education. The relatively light teaching load, together with generous support for their laboratory needs, office space, secretarial support, etc. were some of the main reasons that they chose to come to ICR---and also why they chose to stay at ICR. (Obviously, the match between ICR's mission and the faculty members' personal belief systems is the overarching reason that they are employed at ICR.)

The faculty also viewed themselves as being well represented in administrative and academic decisions affecting the educational program and its quality. At this time they do not have within their internal governance structure an official faculty representative connected to their Board of Directors (other than the CEO who is nominally designed as a faculty member on the organizational chart). However, due to their small size as an institution, they did not view this as problematic. The faculty did indicate, however, that as the institution grows and the size of the faculty grows, they would like to make more explicit the role of the faculty in the institution's governance.

Regarding opportunities for the faculty to continue their own professional growth, they viewed ICR as very supportive. For example, all travel costs for at least one to two professional conferences per year in their disciplinary specialties (such as the American Chemical Society conference or the American Geophysical Association conference) are fully paid by the institution. In addition, they may attend at the institution's expense the annual International Conference on Creation (ICC.org), if they wish to do so. When asked if the faculty or the administration at ICR also maintain professional ties with the American Academy of Religion (North America's major professional association for scholars of religion, including scholars who profess creationist views) or attend any of its annual conferences, they said "no."

Standard 11: Academic Freedom and Faculty Security

The institution has in its faculty handbook a statement on academic freedom which indicates that faculty clearly have as scholars the right to the freedom to speak as an

authority in their own field of study. At the same time, the statement on academic freedom concludes with a paragraph which says

"In choosing to be a part of the faculty of the Division of Education and Research, faculty members indicate their support of the Division's doctrinal position and their commitment to the mission of the Institute. It is, therefore, expected that the faculty members, as teachers, scholars, and citizens, will further the ministry of the Institute through their life example and commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord. Acceptance of this limitation to academic freedom is reaffirmed with each annual contract."

ICR does not provide tenure for its faculty, but rather yearly renewable contracts subject to satisfactory performance as evaluated by the administration of the institution. The faculty members discussed with the visiting team their satisfaction with the terms of their employment (please note related information in sections 9 and 10 of this report). The institution also makes clear in the faculty handbook the expectation that faculty publications should promote a creationist point of view, and represent unequivocal commitment to the stated doctrinal positions in the institution's Bylaws.

The institution's statement on academic freedom has been distributed to all the faculty, as part of a larger faculty handbook. The handbook itself has been distributed to all faculty, and for the purposes of this institution, the handbook appears to be adequate. The ICR faculty handbook is actually fairly detailed. For example, it specifies that all faculty are encouraged to attend and participate in daily prayer sessions in the main conference room from 11:10 a.m to 11:30 a.m. All faculty have received their annual written contract, and the contract has been signed by the appropriate officer of ICR and the faculty member. The leadership of the institution indicated that it has all current faculty contracts on file.

Standard 12: Curriculum

The visiting team meet with all faculty members in a group meeting, and in addition a visiting team member met individually with each of the full-time teaching faculty, in order to examine and discuss the curriculum. Our examination of course syllabi, required and recommended texts for the courses, samples of student work, electronic course support and courseware, and related curricular materials indicated to the visiting team that the level of rigor of their science education and science courses was acceptable for initial master's degree. The differing perspectives of the creation/evolution issue was addressed by the faculty member in each of the courses, so that students will know and understand current scientific information and research from non-creationist scientists. Obviously, the faculty member in each of the courses also provides the student with the creationist perspective, as well. When asked if students seemed reluctant to learn about the creationist view of scientific topics as part of the course, the faculty indicated that the students at ICR tend to self-select such that they already have views that closely match those of the faculty and administration of ICR.

The proposed master's degree in science education will include a major in science education and a minor in one of three areas---biology, geology, or astro/geophysics. The visiting team's understanding of the proposed program is that it will be a minimum of 11 quarterly courses, that a thesis will not be required. Students will be required to complete a capstone course that includes a comprehensive examination administered in part via a conference telephone call, and on-line for other parts of the examination. The

proposed degree program of 11 quarterly courses may be lengthened in the case of an incoming student whose writing skills were below average, in that the student would be required to take an additional course which would require extensive writing. However, the faculty reported that there are very, very few students who fall into that category. Students typically will take 12-13 weeks to complete a course; courses are delivered primarily on-line with "real time" group interaction; additionally, individual on-line work and telephone meetings with the instructor are required. Students typically take one or two courses per quarter, with completion of 11 courses in approximately 2 to 2.5 years. Some students take longer to complete the degree, but they are required to complete their studies within 5 years.

The scope and sequence for each proposed course for this proposed master's degree was clearly defined and appeared to be sufficient. The faculty have been the decision-makers in this regard; they report that they have collaborative and collectively designed and prepared all but one of the necessary courses, and they expect that by January, 2008 the one remaining course will be ready to offer. At this time, the four full-time faculty each represent the sole provider of the courses that will be needed by students to complete the major and the minor in the proposed master's degree. Assuming that student enrollment grows rapidly from 54 to double that number (as they hope), it appears to the visiting team that they will need to add faculty to meet teaching and advising load of additional students.

It is fair to say that the proposed master's degree in science education, while carrying an embedded component of creationist perspectives/views, is nevertheless a plausible program. The proposed degree would be generally comparable to an initial master's degree in science education from one of the smaller, regional universities in the state. The visiting team wanted to know what was the applicability of the proposed degree, i.e., how will students use this degree? The faculty indicated that the majority of their students are teachers in private schools (Christian academies), or were home-school teachers, or were teaching in public schools, and wanted to complete a master's in science education to advance their career and/or to pass the Texas teacher licensing examination in science.

The visiting team also wanted to know if there was their evidence of student learning in courses that have been offered to date. The faculty reported that their primary evidence of successful student learning was the continuation of their students in the teacher workforce, whether in private or public schools; of passing the state's teacher licensing examination in science for elementary or middle school or high school; or continuation of graduate study in a doctoral or professional degree program. The faculty further reported that their students have no trouble passing teacher licensing examinations, although admittedly they have a very small number of students to begin with. If their proposed degree program is approved and begins producing graduates, it would be important to monitor the pass/fail rates of their graduates who attempt the Texas teacher licensing examination in science as evidence of student learning.

Standard 13: General Education

Not applicable.

Standard 14: Credit for Work Completed Outside a Collegiate Setting

Not applicable. ICR does not accept any work completed outside a collegiate setting.

Standard 15: Library

The institution maintains its physical library at its campus in Santee, California. As a result, the ability to view the collection by the visiting committee was not possible. Since the students who take courses at ICR are online, the institution utilizes online resources for students to access. These resources were electronic journals.

If a student wants to utilize resources which are not available through the institution's online collection, they are told to go to a local academic library to obtain more resources. However, the institution does not provide access to the WorldCat database which indicates library holdings around the world. As a result, the students do not know about any other resources which could be utilized for research. The faculty stated that they would send them copies of articles if they requested. However, the institution does not provide Interlibrary Loan to its students to allow for equal access of library resources to students to facilitate their research.

The institution currently employs a librarian who has received an MLIS from an accredited American Library Association university. However, this individual works approximate four hours a week. The budget and collection development function of acquiring online journals was done by the Interim Dean of Education and Research. Library instruction on how to utilize the resources was not provided by the librarian. The faculty stated that they provided the instruction for the library resources.

The visiting committee believes that the current level of library support is inadequate to meet the needs of ICR graduate students and faculty. The visiting committee strongly recommends that ICR hire a full-time librarian who is able to work 40 hours a week in order to support the needs of the Texas campus. The librarian should be in charge of the budget and collection development duties. The librarian should also provide an instruction component on how to utilize the library resources instead of the faculty.

The ICR website should also contain a web link which allows student to send inquiries to the librarian.

Standard 16: Facilities

The institution consists of three buildings which are approximately 52,000 square feet in their entirety. One on-site classroom was in one of the buildings. The room contained tables and chairs to accommodate thirty to forty students comfortably. The lighting, temperature, and cleanliness in the room were optimal. The room also contained whiteboards and a projector connected to a computer. The computer was equipped with Microsoft Office and access to the Internet.

The environmental conditions were optimal throughout the entire building and well maintained.

One of the buildings is in construction and will contain laboratories for the faculty to conduct research. The third building is also currently under construction and will be used for future expansion.

The institution conducts a majority of their courses in an online environment. As a result, the classroom which was built will be utilized on a limited basis. The course

management system that the faculty utilizes is Moodle. The software is a free open source which can be obtained through the Internet. The faculty also uses Yahoo! Instant Messenger for synchronous communication.

The campus does not have any student housing.

Standard 17: Academic Records

The records for each student were complete and contained student contact and identification information. The records also contained admission documents and transcripts.

The files are stored in two locations. The physical files are held in locked metal fireproof file cabinets on campus. An electronic backup of the records is maintained on a server which is located on an off-site location.

Students are provided with transcripts upon the institution receiving a letter requesting the documents. The institution charges \$2.00 for each copy of the student's transcript requested.

Standard 18: Accurate and Fair Representation in Publications, Advertising and Promotion

The institution conducts its own advertising. The materials do not appear to be deceptive, misleading or unfair. The college catalog is available in print or through the Internet on the Institute of Christian Research's website. The 47-page 2007-2008 catalog contained adequate descriptions of the purpose, board, faculty, admission policies, graduation requirements, departments, courses, costs, and refunds.

Standard 19: Academic Advising and Counseling

Student advising is conducted by the Department Chair of Science Education. The department heads serve as advisors to the students according to their minors. A web forum is available for students to post questions concerning which courses they should take in the next quarter. The Science Department Chair answers these questions. Faculty and instructors are also available online and through the phone for any personal counseling that may be necessary. Documentation of student advisement did not exist.

The institution offers an online orientation for their students. The orientation contains evaluations of students' computer skills, pretests of their knowledge in the sciences, and tests which determine each individual's learning style. The orientation also provides information about the various components of course management system.

The institution does not provide career placement for students who have completed their degree.

Standard 20: Student Rights and Responsibilities

The 8-page student handbook was very clear and contained all relevant information pertaining to registration, grades, transcripts, and student conduct. Each entering student receives a copy of the student handbook. The student handbook also clearly

stated due process in regard to disciplinary matters. The written policies appeared to be fair and equitable.

Standard 21: Health Services

Since the institution conducts its courses online through its course management system, it does not provide health services for its students. It is stated in the student application, that students are responsible for having their own adequate health coverage.

**Institute for Creation Research
Graduate School (ICRGS)
December 14, 2008**

***Initial Response
to the
Report of Evaluation
for the
Institute for Creation Research
Irving, Texas
November 8, 2007***

**Prepared and Submitted by
Henry M. Morris III
Chief Executive Officer, ICR
Edwin G. Miller
Chief Academic Officer, ICRGS**

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Executive Summary

The Institute for Creation Research (ICR) and its educational ministry, The Institute for Creation Research Graduate School (ICRGS), wishes to express its appreciation for the visit by THECB's evaluation team of Dr. Rankin, Dr. Waller, Dr. White and THECB representative Linda McDonough. All were professional and courteous in their demeanor, and thorough in their analysis of our academic effort.

Our faculty was especially appreciative of the team's encouragement on the quality of our curriculum and the recognition that the "proposed degree would be generally comparable to an initial master's degree in science education from one of the smaller, regional universities in the state." The ICRGS is committed to develop a fully accredited program under SACS, and stands ready to take its place among Texas institutions that are an active contributor to the goals of "Closing the Gaps by 2015."

The three areas of concern expressed by the visiting team are addressed more fully in the body of this response document, and are already being implemented as rapidly as the transition from the California campus to the Texas campus will permit.

Standard 4: Distinction of Roles

As will be noted, the Executive Committee of the full ICR board has already acted to form a distinct sub-committee of the board which will be responsible for the ICRGS policy, independent from the full board, and will exclude the CEO and President.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

As will be noted, the ICRGS was under a burdensome matrix assessment model mandated by TRACS which was not functioning well or serving the purpose for which institutional assessment was designed. With the encouragement of Dr. Waller, the ICRGS has already begun to incorporate the Nichols model, and has submitted a first draft of the "Handbook for Effectiveness Assessment" in this response.

Standard 15: Library

Given the short notice in advance of this response, ICR has been unable to contract a specific librarian or obtain contractual services from sister colleges in the Dallas Metroplex. However, as will be noted in the response, ICR is in general agreement with the THECB recommendations and will implement them as soon as possible.

ICR is committed to a strong educational base in Texas. We have moved our headquarters here, and have invested in a new campus, new facilities, and new laboratories. We hope to be a strong working partner with the THECB and the academic community.

Standard 4: Distinction of Roles

Although ICR has maintained a board role for its corporate CEO and the ICRGS President for several decades, we are willing to follow the recommendations of the THECB to remove paid staff from voting board functions as it relates to the Graduate School. After discussing the short-term possibilities with Dr. Waller regarding these issues, a meeting of the ICR board Executive Committee was called in which a separate committee of the board was formed to oversee the ICRGS exclusively. Dr. Henry Morris (CEO) and Dr. John Morris (President) were not included in the membership of that committee.

Here is a verbatim copy of the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting.

**MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Institute for Creation Research**

November 28, 2007

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held on November 28, 2007 Present *via* teleconference were Messrs. J. Morris, H. Morris, Bliss, Mitchell, and Wismer.

At the request of the Texas Higher Education Governing Board, it was strongly suggested that a Board Subcommittee, consisting of non-employee board members, be established with oversight for the ICR Graduate School. Following considerable discussion, it was moved by Bliss, seconded by J. Morris to constitute this committee consisting of Messrs. Bliss, Mitchell, and Wismer to serve for an initial one year term. Wismer to serve as Chairman. Passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
David A. Wismer, Chairman

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

This section of our response to the THECB team's concerns may provide the Commission with some helpful background on the ICRGS use of assessment tools for the past several years. Although we readily admit that the system previously in use has not been effective, we were under requirements from the former national accrediting agency, TRACS, and attempted to use the model that was recommended by them.

Subsequent to the visit by the THECB team and our conversations with Dr. Waller, we have obtained the materials for the Nichols model and are herewith submitting our initial handbook to implement that process.

Background

In the Spring and Summer of 2005, the ICR Graduate School expanded its ongoing approach to assessing institutional effectiveness by designing and installing an Assessment/Strategic Planning/Budgeting (ASPB) system utilizing the template proscribed by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).

The process design for the TRACS system appears in Appendix A.

Almost immediately after its installation, problems with the ASPB system were encountered:

- while it may have been manageable by larger institutions, the TRACS mandated system proved to be highly labor intensive for an administrative/faculty/staff team of less than 10 people;
- the annual ASPB cycle allowed only a few weeks for the assessment process itself, since the Strategic Planning phase was based on the Assessment phase, and the annual Budgeting phase was based on the Strategic Planning phase;
- integrating the ASPB system with the annual meetings of the Board of Trustees in January and June, exacerbated even further the management of the already cumbersome system; and
- the utility of the Assessment results were eventually deemed to be of marginal value in light of the Board's subsequent decision to relocate several departments of the Institute, including the Graduate School, to the Dallas Center.

Further, as the ICRGS team began to prepare for the THECB Site Evaluation Team visit in the fall of 2007, it became apparent that to do justice to our Application for a Certificate of Authority to Award Degrees in Texas, it would not be possible for the Graduate School to adequately fulfill the TRACS requirements

that must be completed in the same timeframe (i.e., filing the 2007 Annual Report; design and submission of the Self-Study Proposal; beginning of the Self-Study for reaffirmation of accreditation, should the Self-Study Proposal be approved).

Thus, the decision was made to withdraw from TRACS and a letter to this effect was sent to the TRACS Executive Director in September, over the signatures of the Chair of the Board and the Chief Executive Officer.

In addition to the practical benefits of eliminating the TRACS accreditation renewal workload, the ICR Graduate School was also freed from the responsibility of having to continue the time consuming TRACS ASPB system.

Prior to the arrival of the THECB Site Evaluation team for its visit on November 8, the ICR Graduate School was already anticipating the opportunity to design and install a more relevant, user-friendly assessment system.

The THECB Site Evaluation Team Visit

During the visit the a member of the team (Dr. Rusty Waller) spend a portion of his interview time discussing with the Dean the issue of annual assessment of institutional effectiveness and the background associated with the previous effort described above. During these discussions the Nichols model was suggested as a viable alternative, for these reasons:

- it could be interpolated to fit the parameters of the Graduate School; managed by one person with input from appropriate sources; and data could be collected from end-users;
- the annual cycle allocates most of the academic year to Assessment, not just several weeks;
- after initial approval of the system by the Board of Trustees at its meeting in January, 2008, integrating the Assessment and Board meeting timelines would be greatly simplified; and
- assessment of effectiveness in the form of outcomes (Nichols model) would be of much more central utility and value than assessment of processes (TRACS template).

Subsequent Activities

Following the Team Visit, the Dean obtained a current copy of the "Handbook of Institutional Effectiveness" from an institution that had interpolated its assessment system from the Nichols model.

Utilizing this resource plus others pertaining to the Nichols model, the Dean composed the first draft of a Handbook for Effectiveness Assessment. This first draft appears in Appendix B.

The Dean will be soliciting feedback from the Committee of the Whole and from outside sources who are themselves utilizing the Nichols model of assessment at their own institutions.

Taking into account the anticipated feedback, the Dean will edit a second draft of the Handbook, then submit it to the CEO, who will submit it to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for review/revision/approval. The Dean will incorporate the changes recommended by the Executive Committee of the Board and has made copies available to the CEO for distribution to the entire Board the second week in January, for review/revision/approval at its meeting on the fourth Saturday of that month.

Standard 15: Library

Initial Conditions

Having only recently (January 2007) made the decision to merge the on-campus degree programs into one online Science Education degree with four minors, ICR had not anticipated the need for additional librarian services beyond the part time help that had seemed to be sufficient.

Feedback from our students and faculty (as the THECB team noted) was always positive, indicating that neither student nor faculty felt additional professional help was needed. That did not negate the need, but the need was not apparent to those involved.

ICRGS had been, of course, cooperating with local universities in the California area for many years – mostly using the online facilities available at the various campuses. Our scientific journal collection, while useful to on-campus faculty and visiting students for historical information, was not justified in continuing as ICRGS transitioned to an online program.

All of our journal collection is now available on line, and the requested subscriptions by our faculty (108 different journals) have all been contracted (as was noted by the THECB team). Many of those online journals are accessible now, and the remainder will be available January 1, 2008.

Now that the THECB suggestions are available to us, the ICRGS will implement the recommendations as rapidly as possible

Worldwide Student Body

Given the national and international nature of the ICR constituency, our student body for the MS program is now and will be widely disbursed. It therefore becomes difficult to provide a localized librarian position that can serve across multiple time zones.

ICR agrees with the THECB requirement for professional librarian help that must be made available to the student body. And we further agree that the students and the faculty would benefit from the kind of research assistance that a trained librarian could provide. The dilemma, in our mind, is how to provide that service during the hours in which a student is likely to be working online (mostly evening and weekends) and across many time zones and in other countries.

Online Library Orientation Course

A suggestion by Linda McDonough from the THECB seems to be excellent beginning. ICRGS will immediately prepare an online Orientation Course for use with the online library resources. Dr. Patti Nason, the Chair of the Science Education department at ICRGS and Jennifer Ewing, MLIS the Seminary

Librarian of the Southern California Seminary in El Cajon, California will work together to formulate this orientation.

Much of that work has already been done in preparation for the contracting with the various journals, and in the training of the faculty who are now teaching the online courses. Formal implementation of that orientation course should be completed within the first quarter of 2008.

Regional Librarian Contracts

Given the world-wide distribution of our student body, it appears that a workable solution would be to obtain contractual relationships with qualified librarians within the several time zones and, perhaps, in the key countries where students are concentrated, that would be able to offer their expertise during the evening hours when the students would be most likely to require their services.

As the number of librarian contracts multiply, it will become necessary to employ a full-time librarian in the Dallas location to oversee the expanding library core. Until that time, however, it seems that ICR would be able (through its many contacts among the Evangelical colleges and universities) to secure adequate part-time help in the areas where our student body is concentrated.

Since we just received these challenges from the THECB this week, we have not yet been able to execute any contracts.

Summary

The ICRGS is committed to implement the recommendations of the THECB, and ultimately to proceed as rapidly toward full accreditation with SACS as time and resources permit.

Given the world-wide distribution of our online students, ICR suggests the following as a plan to meet the requirements of professional librarian expertise for both student and faculty.

- *Compile and implement an online Library Orientation Course for all users.*
- *Recruit and contract regional librarians, in appropriate time zones and countries, who will serve the students and faculty during their most likely times for need.*
- *Recruit and train a Library Supervisor as the need grows who will oversee the ongoing library program of the ICRGS.*

Appendix A

TRACS Assessment Design

Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Budgeting Process Design

Introduction to the Design

The parameters governing the initial strategic planning process design follow:

- Collect appropriate documents from Larry Vardiman, Mark Rasche, and Don Barber, review them, and determine their relevance to strategic planning;
- Interview John Morris, Ken Cumming, Mark Rasche, Don Rohrer, Don Barber, and Henry Morris, III; and
- Compose an initial Strategic Planning Process design that will:
 - be comprehensive yet place minimum demands on those who will take the steps in the process,
 - be in harmony with the strategic planning process of the Graduate School but not driven by it; and
 - fit a timeline that is compatible with regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Trustees.

The overall format of the ICRGS Strategic Planning Process has been followed, but the content varies in significant ways, in keeping with the dual criteria of simplicity harmony with the ICRGS process.

In order for the timeline of the ICR Strategic Planning Process design to be compatible with regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Trustees, the initial iteration of the Strategic Plan must be ready for distribution during the first week in January, 2006, for review by the Board members prior to their winter meeting toward the end of January.

Similarly, the budget that emerges from the Strategic Plan, following Board review and approval of the Plan in January, must be ready for distribution during the middle of May, 2006, for review by the Board members prior to their spring meeting in June.

Part One of the design makes reference to the mission and organizational structure as they currently exist plus specifies the components of this structure that can be employed in both monitoring the strategic planning timeline and developing the initial Strategic Plan. Also, mention is made here regarding the resources of ICR and the differing opinions about the use of some of them in the future.

Part Two of the design focuses on the assessment process: collecting data and information that pertain to institutional strengths and weakness plus environmental opportunities and threats (i.e., SWOT stands for internal Strengths and Weaknesses; external Opportunities and Threats). It is the comparing and contrasting of these two sets of data/information that will make the process and plan 'strategic' because it involves this 'strategizing' process. In view of the limited time available for creating the initial strategic plan, collection of data/information on environmental opportunities and threats should take place only one time (rather than on an ongoing basis). Collection of data/information on institutional strengths and weaknesses will be restricted to:

- (1) a five item questionnaire to be completed by the President, members of the Administrative Council, and any others who may be designated by the Chief Operations Officer (see a generic example of the five-item assessment questionnaire in Appendix B), plus
- (2) what is already available in existing documents.

Part Three of the design contains both the strategizing process, and the steps to be taken in the creation of the initial Strategic Plan document based on the strategizing process.

Part Four of the design describes the budgeting process that is based on the strategic plan, after the Plan is reviewed/revised/approved by the Board at its January meeting.

Part Five of the design describes the second iteration of the strategic planning cycle, including reviews/revisions to the assessment, strategic planning, and budgeting processes in the first iteration.

Part One: Mission and Organizational Structure

Mission

The current mission of the Institute, as reflected in the draft of the Trustee Handbook, appears in Appendix A of this plan design. In the past two years the question of the currency of this mission statement has been raised, various members of the Institute community have reviewed it and offered suggestions for modification, and responses to these suggestions have also been distributed. At its January meeting, the Board needs to review/revise/approve the Trustees' Handbook, which contains the current Institute Mission statement.

Organizational Structure

The current organizational structure is presented in the Organizational Chart contained in Appendix B. In the past two years, the organizational structure has been altered with the creation of the position of Chief Operations Officer (COO). This position reports directly to the Board, in parallel with the President. At the present time the Institute is made up of three divisions: the Graduate School (containing both instruction and research), Operations, and Outreach. From the interviews with key administrators it is clear that there exists a variety of opinions about the role each division should play and the activities in which they should be engaged. When the SWOT data/information are assembled, the viability of the current organizational structure can be formally and objectively strategize.

Resources

The Institute has a significant resource base, which includes an increasingly more active Board, an external constituency of hundreds of thousands of loyal supporters; an extensive physical plant; a veteran team of administrators, scientists, and support staff; the absence of debt; extensive hardware and software; library collection; utilitarian furnishings; and office and other forms of equipment that facilitate day to day operation. Based on the interviews with the administrators, it is clear that opinions vary widely regarding the future status and utilization of these resources. Opinions that were mentioned frequently and differed widely focused on the viability of remaining in the current facility or moving to the Dallas/Ft. Worth area of Texas.

Organizing for Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Budgeting

The COO and the Administrative Council

The Chief Operations Officer and/or his designee can serve as the Overseer of the assessment, strategic planning, and budgeting process. The Overseer can keep the Board informed through monthly communications with the Chair of the Board between regularly scheduled Board meetings, and utilize the Administrative Council as the Strategic Planning Council (rather than creating another committee to support the COO in the planning process).

Once the strategic planning design has been approved by the appropriate authorities, it can be the role of the Administrative Council to monitor the strategic planning process timeline, based on regular reports submitted to it by the Overseer. In the future this role may be delegated or retained by the Administrative Council, depending on the extent to which the organizational structure remains the same.

Selecting the General Assessment Instruments

Because of the short amount of time available to produce the initial iteration of the ICR Strategic Plan (November through December, 2005), extensive assessment instruments may not be developed. Instead, the Overseer/designee can distribute, collect, and review responses to the five item questionnaires. Respondents to these questionnaires may attach any documents they deem appropriate that will help the Overseer/designee in composing the institutional scan. The questionnaire items can be tailored to address the strengths and weaknesses of the missions, activities, organizational structure, and resources, of the key organizational units. These units could include, but not be limited to: Office of the President, Office of the Chief Operations Officer, Graduate School (education and research), Operations, and Outreach.

Subsequently, the Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Budgeting Process can be reviewed during the early part of the summer of 2006, revised as deemed appropriate, and, if needed, assessment instruments developed during the middle part of the summer, to be utilized in the second iteration of the assessment process in the late summer and fall of 2006. This review/revision step can be included in the process in subsequent years, as well. See Part Five of this design for information and timelines on the subsequent iteration of the strategic planning process.

Similarly, time does not permit the ongoing assessment of environmental opportunities and threats to be used in composing the initial environmental scan. Thus, the Overseer/designee can review the websites of other organizations that are considered to be 'in the Creationist camp' to determine where opportunities exist; and review the websites of organizations that are considered to be 'antagonistic to the Creationist camp' to determine the existence and nature of threats.

Subsequently, the steps in developing the environmental scan can be reviewed during the early part of the summer of 2006, revised as deemed appropriate, and the schedule for collection of data/information on environmental opportunities/threats lengthened, if such a change is deemed to be worthwhile. See Part Five of this design for information and timelines on the subsequent iteration of the planning process.

Establishing Timelines for Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Budgeting

Because of the short time available to develop the strategic plan, the initial timeline for assessment and strategic plan development can be November and December, 2005, and the timeline for budgeting can be February through May,

2006. The initial Assessment/ Strategic Planning/Budgeting process and timeline conclude with the Board's review/ revision/approval of the budget in June. Subsequently, the Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Budgeting timeline can begin in June, with the review of the process and timeline. During July and August, 2006 any adjustments that are deemed appropriate can be made. Then the assessment phase can be implemented from September through November, the strategic planning phase can be implemented in December, and, following Board review/revision/approval of the Plan in January, the budgeting process can take place between January and May. See Part Five of this design information and timelines on the subsequent iteration of the planning process.

Part Two: Collection/Assembly of Assessment Data and Information

Introduction

The Overseer/designee can take responsibility for administering the five item questionnaire to the other respondents.

The President and COO can take responsibility for completing the five item questionnaires that pertain to the organizational structure, while the Dean and Directors of Operations and Outreach, can also take responsibility for assembling the data and information that will be relevant in the strategizing process associated with the respective missions, activities, organizational structures, and resources of their organizational units.

The Dean of the Graduate School, by virtue of the fact that his division is already engaged in an assessment process, is currently collecting the appropriate data and information that will be relevant to the strategizing process associated with the mission, activities, organizational structures, and resources of the Graduate School .

Timeline for Collection/Assembly of Assessment Data and Information

Time Frame	Tasks to be Accomplished	Responsibility for Task
11/07 to 11/11	Review/Revise/Approve ICR Initial Strategic Planning Process Design	Chief Operations Officer and Eddy Miller
	Decide on who will serve as Overseer	Chief Operations Officer
11/14 to 11/18	Disseminate and Review Design, Directors'/Dean's assignments	Overseer, Administrative Council
11/21- 12/02	Collect/assemble Assessment Data/ Information for Institute scan	Oversee/designee, Dean, Directors of Operations Outreach
	Collect/assemble Assessment Data/ Information for environmental scan	Oversee/designee

Part Three: Strategizing, Creating the Initial Strategic Plan

Introduction

Once the sets of environmental and Institute scan assessment data/information are collected/assembled, the strategizing and planning processes can begin. In this Part, data/information derived from the environmental scan are reviewed and descriptions of external opportunities and threats composed.

Next, the institutional scan data/information are reviewed and descriptions of internal strengths and weaknesses are composed.

The third step in this Part is to analyze and compose descriptions of four areas: (1) environmental opportunities where the Institute is strong; (2) environmental opportunities where the Institute is weak; (3) environmental threats where the Institute is strong; and (4) environmental threats exist where the Institute is weak. The fourth step in the strategizing and planning process is to propose plans for addressing each of these four areas. In response to area #1, the plans should address ways and means of focusing the Institute's strengths on the opportunities. In response to area #2, the plans should address the feasibility of strengthening the Institute in order to pursue the opportunities. In response to area #3, plans should address what steps need to be taken in order to insure that the threats do not negatively impact the Institute. And finally, in response to area #4, plans should address the feasibility of strengthening the Institute in order to insure that the threats do not negatively impact it.

The final step in this Part is to assess and assign priorities to each of the plans being proposed and, unless there appears to be an urgent need to move more quickly, array them over a five year period of time, beginning with the new fiscal year, July 1, 2006.

Timeline for Strategizing, Creating the Initial Strategic Plan

Time Frame	Tasks to be Accomplished	Responsibility for Task
12/05 to 12/09	Review environmental scan/data/information, compose descriptions of opportunities, threats	Overseer/designee(s)
12/12 to 12/16	Compose descriptions of (1) opportunities/strengths; (2) opportunities/weaknesses (3) threats/strengths; and (4) threats/weaknesses	Overseer/designee(s)
12/10 to 12/23	Propose plans for each of the four areas	Overseer/designee(s)
12/26 to 12/30	Assign priorities to plans, compose plan	Oversee/designee(s)
	Review, revise the initial strategic plan	Administrative Council
01/02 to 01/06	Duplicate and distribute strategic plan to Board members for review/revision/ approval at it January meeting	Oversee/designee

Part Four: Budgeting Process, Based on the Approved Strategic Plan

Introduction

Once the Board members approve the Strategic Plan, the budgeting process based on it can begin with the distribution of the approved plan to the Overseer. The Overseer can make copies of the Plan and prepare instructions for budget preparation, then go over them with the members of the Administrative Council. The Respondents can prepare Preliminary Budgets for their respective areas of responsibility, review them at an Administrative Council meeting, and distribute them to the Chief Financial Officer, who can compile and distribute a combined Preliminary Budget Plan to the Administrative Council for review and response. The Administrative Council can review the CFO's Preliminary Budget Plan, make suggestions regarding revisions, and returns the Preliminary Budget Plan/suggestions to the CFO. The suggestions form the basis for development of the Proposed Budget Plan.

The CFO can revise the Preliminary Budget Plan taking into account the Administrative Council's suggestions, then produce the Proposed Budget Plan and distribute it to the Administrative Council for a second review and response. The Administrative Council can review the Proposed Budget Plan, make suggestions regarding revisions, and return the Proposed Budget Plan/suggestions to the CFO. The suggestions form the basis for development of the Final Budget Plan.

The CFO revises the Proposed Budget Plan taking into account the Administrative Council's suggestions, then produces the Final Budget Plan and gives it to the COO for distribution to the Board members in time for them to review it prior to their June meeting.

Timeline for Budgeting Process

Time Frame	Tasks to be Accomplished	Responsibility for Task
February 2006	Preparation of Preliminary Budget Plans for Following Areas of Responsibility	
	Executive offices Graduate School Operations Division Outreach Division	President Dean Director Director
	Compile Preliminary Budget Plans and Review them	Administrative Council
March 2006	Forward Preliminary Budget Plans to CFO	Administrative Council
	Prepare Preliminary Budget Plan, and Distribute to the Administrative Council	Chief Financial Officer
April 2006	Review Preliminary Budget Plan, Forward Suggestions to CFO	Administrative Council
	Respond to Suggestions, compose Proposed CFO Budget Plan, and distribute to the Administrative Council	
May 2006	Review Proposed Budget Plan, Forward Suggestions to CFO	Administrative Council
	Respond to Suggestions, compose Final Budget Plan, Distribute to COO	CFO
	Distribute Final Budget Plan to Board members in time to review before June meeting of the Board	Chief Operations Officer
June 2006	Final Budget Plan is reviewed/revised/Approved	Board of Trustees

With the approval of the Strategic Plan at its January meeting and approval of the Budget based on the Plan at its June meeting, the Administrative Council is in a position to begin the implementation of the Plan and Budget for the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Similarly, the Administrative Council is in a position to begin the subsequent iteration of the Assessment, Planning, and Budgeting process for 2006 – 2007.

Part Five: Subsequent Assessment, Strategic Planning, and Budgeting Process

Introduction

Because the time available for assessment, planning, and budgeting for 2006 – 2007 is approximately four months longer than the time available for the initial iteration, attention can be given to designing the optimum process.

During the summer of 2006, the initial iteration can be reviewed and revised as needed in order to improve precision without increasing workload. Assessment can be accomplished in the fall of 2006, followed by strategizing and composing the strategic plan in November and December. Board review and approval of the plan can continue to occur at its January meeting, thus facilitating the budgeting process in the Spring. The Board can review the budget that is based on the plan when it meets in June, approving both plan and budget in time for implementation with the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Timeline for Subsequent Assessment, Strategic Planning and Budgeting Process

Time Frame	Tasks to be Accomplished	Responsibility for Task
July, 2006	Review assessment, strategic planning and budgeting process design; revise as needed	Administrative Council
August 2006	Review assessment instrument (questionnaire); revise/replace as needed	Administrative Council
September 2006	Begin assessment process	Administrative Council
October 2006	Complete assessment process	Administrative Council
November 2006	Begin/complete strategizing process	Overseer/designee(s)
December 2006	Compose strategic plan	Overseer/designee(s)
January 2007	Distribute Strategic Plan to Board	Overseer/designee(s)
	Receive approval of the Strategic Plan	Board of Trustees
February 2007	Develop Preliminary Budget Plans for Organizational units	Unit Leaders
	Review Preliminary Budget Plans for units	CFO
March 2007	Review Proposed Budget Plan for the Institute	Administrative Council
April 2007	Compose Proposed Budget Plan for the Institute as a	Administrative Council

	whole	
May 2007	Distribute Final Budget Plan to the Board	COO
June 2007	Review and approve Final Budget Plan	Board of Trustees

With the Board's approval of the Strategic Plan at its January meeting, and approval of the Final Budget Plan at its June meeting, the Administrative Council can begin implementing both at the beginning of the next fiscal year in July of each year.

Appendix B

Handbook for Effectiveness Assessment

1. What is Effectiveness Assessment?

An operational definition of the effectiveness of the Graduate School can be stated this way:

“The ICR Graduate School is effective to the extent that it actualizes its mission and goals.”

Assessment of the Graduate School’s effectiveness is an on-going process that follows an annual cycle involving each organizational unit and consists of seven steps. These steps, along with the months in which they will be taken, are set forth in Section 4, beginning on page 4.

2. Why Assess Effectiveness?

In addition to using the results of the process to improve the effectiveness of each organizational unit, the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report is reviewed by the CEO and its contents are used by him to inform the Strategic Planning and Budgeting process.

Further, the Graduate School assesses its effectiveness in order to document compliance with various external agencies including the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

The SACS Core Requirement pertaining to effectiveness assessment follows:

- “2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**”

The Effectiveness Assessment System of the Graduate School is designed to generate, organize, utilize, and report evidence that complies with these expectations.

3. The Program Outcomes Model

The Program Outcomes Model consists of four components: (1) Resources, (2) Processes, (3) Outputs, and (4) Outcomes.

Inputs include such resources as administration, faculty, staff, students, curriculum, library, technologies, and policies/procedures, while **processes include such activities and services** as advertising, admission, orientation, registration, and instruction. **Outputs include such results** as numbers of students recruited, taught, retained and completed, numbers of classes taught, and numbers of learning resources utilized, while **outcomes include such benefits to students as** new knowledge gained, skills increased, values changed, and behaviors modified.

While each of these components is both essential to the achievement of Graduate School effectiveness and is interdependent with each of the others, effectiveness is best assessed by measuring outcomes. If outcomes meet minimum criteria for success, it can be assumed that the inputs, processes, and outputs are acceptable. However, if minimum criteria for success are not met, then a search can be conducted to find the reasons. Once the reasons are identified, then these findings can be used to address adjustments which will correct the deficiencies.

4. Annual Effectiveness Assessment Cycle

Because the Graduate School is transitioning to its new assessment cycle, two cycles are presented below: (1) the initial cycle that begins in December, 2007 and concludes in April, 2008 with the review and revision of the initial cycle; and (2) the subsequent and continuing cycle that begins in May, 2008.

Further, because the Graduate School offers only one degree program with four minors, and has a relatively small number of administrators and faculty members, it is possible for effectiveness assessment to be designed and managed by "the Committee of the Whole"; that is, each administrator and each faculty member can be involved in each phase of the design and management of the assessment process.

The Initial Cycle

In December, 2007, each organizational unit in the Graduate School (i.e., the academic departments, Office of Admission and Registrar, Learning Resources Team, etc.) will compose purpose statements that are compatible with the mission of the Graduate School.

In January, 2008, each organizational unit will describe their intended outcomes, establish criteria by which success can be determined, and identify kinds/sources of data for measuring success.

In February, 2008, a pilot study will be conducted to determine the viability of the Effectiveness Assessment System. Utilizing the products of the organizational units from their work in December and January, the Dean will assemble the data, determine the extent to which the success criteria have been met, and compose an annotated version of the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report. The Committee of the Whole will edit the annotated version and produce the final draft.

In March, 2008, the final draft of the annotated version of the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report will be delivered to the CEO for review prior to his initiation of the planning and budgeting cycle.

In April, 2008, the Committee of the Whole will review the entire Effectiveness Assessment Process and revise it as deemed appropriate.

The Subsequent and Continuing Cycle

In May, 2008 and each May thereafter, utilizing the latest version of the Effectiveness Assessment Process adopted by the Committee of the Whole, the organizational units in the Graduate School will affirm/revise their purpose statements that are compatible with the mission of the Graduate School, then describe their intended outcomes, establish their criteria for success, and identify the kinds/sources of data /information for measuring success.

From June, 2008 through January, 2009, and each equivalent calendar segment thereafter, the Dean will oversee the collection of data and the compilation of results.

In February, 2009 and each February thereafter, the Dean will assemble the data/information, determine the extent to which the success criteria have been met, and compose an annotated version of the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report. The Committee of the Whole will edit the annotated version and produce the final draft.

In March, 2009, and each March thereafter, the final draft of the annotated version of the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report will be delivered to the CEO for review prior to his initiation of the planning and budgeting cycle.

In April, 2009 and each April thereafter, the Committee of the Whole will review the entire Effectiveness Assessment Process and revise it as deemed appropriate.

5. Designing and Installing an Effectiveness Assessment System for Your Organizational Unit

Composing a Purpose Statement

The first step is to compose a purpose statement for your organizational unit that is compatible with the mission statement of the Graduate School.

Following is the stated mission of the Graduate School:

The Institute for Creation Research Graduate School (ICRGS) is the formal education arm of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). ICR has a three-fold mission to research, educate, and communicate Truth involving the study and promotion of scientific creationism, Biblical creationism, and related fields. The ICRGS program provides graduate-level training in science education with minors in the natural sciences that are particularly relevant to the study of origins in an online environment.

The purpose of the ICRGS is (1) to prepare science teachers and other individuals to understand the universe within the integrating framework of Biblical creationism using proven scientific data, and (2) to prepare our students for leadership in science education. A clear distinction is drawn between scientific creationism and Biblical creationism but it is the position of the Institute that the two are compatible and that all genuine facts of science support the Bible.

The programs and curricula of the Graduate School, while similar in factual content to those of other graduate colleges, are distinctive in one major respect: ICR bases its educational philosophy on the foundational truth of a personal Creator-God and His authoritative and unique revelation of truth in the Bible, both Old and New Testament. ICR maintains that scientific creationism should be taught along with the scientific aspects of evolutionism in tax-supported institutions, and that both scientific and Biblical creationism should be taught in Christian schools.

Following are the organizational units for which purpose statements will need to be composed:

Department of Science Education
Department of Astro-Geophysics
Department of Biology
Department of Geology
Office of Admission and Registrar
Learning Resources
Office of the Dean

Following are some questions to consider in composing the purpose statement for your organizational unit:

Who do you serve?

What are the primary functions of your unit?

What are your core activities?

Following is a sample purpose statement for an instructional unit:

The purpose of the **Science Education Department** is to prepare students for employment as middle-school and high school science teachers. The curriculum features courses in education to help the students develop their skills, abilities, and resources needed to design and manage learning experiences.

Following is a sample purpose statement for an administrative unit:

The purpose of the **Registrar's Office** is to serve the students and employees of the Graduate School by receiving and processing applications for admission, processing and reporting student enrollment, maintaining registered student records, receiving and reporting grades, and processing student transcript information.

Describing Intended Outcomes; Establishing Criteria for Success

The second step is to describe the outcomes for your organizational unit that are compatible with the purpose statement of your organizational unit.

Following are some items to consider in describing academic outcomes:

- Minimum skills and competencies required for employment (as identified by employers, advisory committee members, or professional associations)
- Criteria and student competencies set forth by **State authorization agencies , accrediting commissions, or licensing and certification boards**
- Departmental documents and course contents
- Minutes from faculty meetings

Following is a sample intended academic outcomes statement:

Graduates of the masters degree program in Science Education will make a minimum score of ____ on the Texas teacher licensing examination in science.

Following are some items to consider in describing administrative outcomes:

- Compliance with external standards or regulations, established professional standards, "Standards of Good Practice"
- Reasons why end-users can/must avail themselves of the services you offer
- Results you expect after providing your services
- Evidences of effectiveness and efficiency
- End-user satisfaction

Following is a sample of an intended administrative outcome statement:

Learning resource support services will receive a minimum score of _____ from both faculty members and students on the Learning Resources Effectiveness Assessment survey.

Each organizational unit should describe between three and five outcomes to be assessed in the initial Effectiveness Assessment Cycle.

Identifying Kinds/Sources of Data/Information to Measure Success

The third step is to identify the kinds of data/information that can be used as evidence to determine the extent to which the organizational unit outcomes have/have not been achieved, then identify specific, available sources for the necessary data/information.

Following are some items to consider in identifying kinds/sources of data/information to measure success:

- Kinds of data/information can be test score results, formal (but subjective) evaluations by experts, opinions, reports from external agencies,
- Sources of data/information can be end-users and take the form of current internal reports/surveys, newly designed internal reports/surveys, external reviews

Following is a sample of a kind/source of data/information for an academic outcome statement:

The Texas teacher licensing examination in science.

Following is a sample of a kind/source of data/information for an administrative outcome statement:

Student survey in which questions about effectiveness outcomes are asked.

Compiling Results

The fourth step is to collect the data/information needed to measure the success of each outcome statement and determine the extent to which each outcome was achieved.

The dean will be responsible for compiling the data/information needed to measure each of the outcome statements.

Demonstrating Use of Results

The fifth step is to demonstrate that the results have actually been used to change each organizational unit for the better.

Completing this step involves determining the extent to which each outcome was achieved and determining the actions to be taken in order to improve the organizational units where outcomes were not achieved.

6. The Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report

Once the levels of success in achieving each of the outcomes have been determined and the actions to be taken in order to improve the chances for success in achieving the desired outcomes in the future have been specified, The Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report will be drafted by the Dean and edited by the Committee of the Whole (membership includes the Dean, Department Chairs, Registrar, and Librarian). The Report will be distributed to the CEO to be used as a reference in his review of the strategic plan.

The Table of Contents of the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report follows:

- Purpose of the Report
- Process followed in developing the Report
- Effectiveness of the Office of the Dean; Uses of Results
- Effectiveness of the Academic Departments; Uses of Results
 - Science Education
 - Astro-Geophysics
 - Biology
 - Geology
- Effectiveness of the Office of the Registrar; Uses of Results
- Effectiveness of the Library; Uses of Results
- Comments
- Contributors and their Roles

7. Review/Revision of the Effectiveness Assessment Process

Following submission of the Annual Effectiveness Assessment Report to the CEO, the Committee of the Whole will review each step in the Effectiveness Assessment Process, make those changes that are deemed appropriate. Following completion of the revisions, the Dean will lead the Committee of the Whole in the next iteration of the Effectiveness Assessment Process.

