

**Standard Four:
Creating an Organization Committed to Learning and Improvement
Strategic Thinking and Planning**

Prelude

For the last two years Rudolf Steiner College has been seriously engaged in an effort to assess and develop the institution into a learning organization capable of entering the ranks of accredited higher educational establishments. One year ago RSC was able to compile sufficient evidence in its eligibility documents to receive eligibility status from WASC. Since that time the College has been engaged in an extensive organizational wide Self-Study. The institutional planning documents submitted for criterion 20 of the eligibility application were pivotal markers for implementing the second through fourth phases of the strategic plan submitted for the WASC Candidacy & Preparatory Review.

CFR 4.1

The Document Library contains Phase II , III & IV of the RSC Strategic Plan (Phase I was submitted in our the Eligibility Application). In these documents the process of engaging all stakeholders within the College to develop a comprehensive strategic plan is detailed. Concurrent to the Strategic Planning effort was the deliberate and focused examination of how the College could improve upon its educational programs. This included numerous discussions in both the Academic Affairs Committee and Faculty Meetings (see minutes in the Document Library) about the need to re-think our paradigm of teaching transformational education, to increase our standards with regard to students' completed work, and to the necessity to add a dimension of more scholarly work on the part of faculty and the students. This focus was carried into the Dean's Office where many new ideas were incorporated into practices for achieving educational effectiveness. Evidence of these actions can be confirmed by the following initiatives implemented in the last year.

1. Acquiring and implementing the archival system LiveText for posting all syllabi, student forms, student assignments, faculty feedback, grading scale and assignments, and all student records. LiveText is also being used to do aspects of institutional research pertinent to assessing educational effectiveness.
2. The Dean's Office has facilitated trainings on guidelines for syllabi creation in both Faculty Meetings and in individual coaching sessions with faculty. A Syllabus Template and Rubric Template were created and posted on LiveText. Explications on the nature of key assignments and all terms and concepts utilized in syllabi creation have occurred in discussions, and recently summarized in a the document sent to all core faculty entitled, Clarification of Key Terms and Concepts Used in Syllabi. The Dean's Office will make this document available to Adjunct Faculty responsible for syllabus creation before the beginning of the new calendar year – January 1, 2010.
3. The Core Faculty Evaluation Policy and Procedure document demonstrates the re-thinking that has gone into formalizing standards for Faculty performance.

Location CFR Documents prepared for WASC CPR submission

4. The newly adopted Program Review Policy and Procedure guided a Program Review of the 32 Credits MA in Waldorf Education Program. Both documents can be found in the Document Library. Two more program reviews are currently Underway, the Foundations in Anthroposophy Program and the Eurythmy Program. They are due to be completed by February 1, 2010.
5. The 32 Credit MA in Waldorf Education, Teacher Preparation Program is continuing to be offered as a certificated program for training Waldorf teachers. It has been expanded to include 16 more credits for the BPPVE-approved MA degree in Waldorf Education.
6. New program delivery models for the MA Waldorf Education, BPPVE-approved degree have been written, as well as a 24 Credits MA in Waldorf Education: Advanced Studies (see Overview of MA in Waldorf Education Programs Standard One and Document Library).
7. Field Experience Manuals have been revised to assist both students and supervisors in addressing the key elements for teacher trainees.

CFR 4.2

The key planning process of the institution is evident in the manifestation of the Proposal of a Phase IV of the RSC Strategic Plan 11/29/09. This document demonstrates how the College has aligned academic, personnel, fiscal, physical, and technological needs with the strategic objectives and priorities of the institution. It is in the Documents Library. It identifies the centrality of Program Development within the three-pronged strategic focus on the goals of Financial Reporting and Management, Accreditation Process of Organizational & Program Efficacy, and Enrollment/Marketing.

CFR 4.3

During the Self-Study of the College it became quite evident that formal institutional research policies and procedures were lacking. As a small college, RSC has long relied on informal exchange of information and data to make significant assessments of fiscal and program viability. In the advent of entering candidacy for WASC, all departments at the College agreed that a more formal arrangement for doing institutional research was not only necessary, but also desired. A proposed RSC Institutional Research Committee was written for adoption on 11/18/09.

Despite the delay in officially adopting the above proposal, collaborative efforts in gathering quantitative and qualitative data have taken place between the Dean's Academic Office, the Administrative Office of Records and Admissions, the Finance Office, and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Two documents providing evidence of this effort are the proposal of Phase IV of the RSC Strategic Plan and the Program Review of the MA in Waldorf Education, Teacher Preparation Program.

CFR 4.4

The College has instituted a revised Program Proposal, Development, Implementation, and Review Policy. The procedures within this policy clearly define the actions necessary for quality assurance and fiscal viability of programs. Timelines and personnel responsibilities are defined and procedurally guided and tracking forms are provided.

CFR 4.5

Student evaluation forms for courses and instructors have been posted for every course on LiveText. At the end of each course the Program Director prompts the students to fill out and submit their evaluations. The Academic Dean and Program Director review the evaluations at the end of each semester and make changes as suggested or needed. As the Program Director deems necessary, changes are made to improve the course. The Academic Affairs Committee compiles all this data into one set of data-profile for review at the end of the academic year. Issues of assessing effectiveness for both academic and artistic courses, tracking student development in the learning process, and re-evaluating the matrix of alignment with program objectives and student learning outcomes are topical agenda items for the Academic Affairs Committee.

Other sets of data are being pursued through the use of online survey questionnaires sent to alumni, students, staff, and faculty. Although there is not as much data collected on years past, there is a concerted effort to maximize every venue to gather data that may aid the College in its current and future functioning. The many major conferences and workshops hosted by the College provide a primary venue for collecting data.

CFR 4.6

All recognized leaders within the College's governance model are committed to extending the process of the Self-Study into the future. The ethos of servant leadership has been a predominant style of management practiced by the President of the College. Many of the key leaders in the circle of management have also adopted this ethic. In conjunction with this ethos is the innate value of fostering responsibility and initiative in every Faculty and employee at the College. These qualities of leadership and accountability help create a culture dedicated to assuring all aspects of academic freedom (the College Website contains a document link to an article entitled *Academic Freedom & Educational Responsibility* published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities). The Faculty Ethics Policy supports fostering a campus environment wherein the virtues of a learning community prevail.

CFR 4.7

Prior to each Faculty Meeting, members study the principles of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual scientific inquiry. The text currently under study is *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* (1925). Discussion is generated, often leading to affirmations of both the Institutional Goals stated in the College's Mission Statement and an exploration of aspects of transformational education as related to Program Objectives. This provides an ongoing opportunity for the Faculty to participate in shared research, both academically and artistically. The spirit of peer evaluation and support is furthered by the implementation of the Core Faculty Evaluation Policy and Procedure. The Faculty is guided to create a communal collegial body of teaching professionals, as is outlined and suggested by Palmer Parker (see appendix D of the policy).

CFR 4.8

At this point in the life of the College a more transparent and systematic means is being sought to give all stakeholders a voice and a way that their assessments of the effectiveness of the educational programs be accounted for in program reviews. A survey for Alumni was crafted and sent out in the spring of 2009. As mentioned in an essay in Standard One, the response to the survey calls into question the validity as the response was low. New efforts to gain this information are underway and it is hoped that graduates, who return to conferences, will participate in further research efforts. The Dean of Students is preparing to do more surveys as well as to create a RSC Alumni Association in the 2010 – 2011 academic year period.