

3. Do you think the term “Christ-centered” is an accurate substitute for the term *Bible-based faith*?
4. Are there terms other than “Christ-centered” that you prefer?

All the groups were enthusiastic about their participation in the redesign of a SLO considered to be essential in reflecting the educational philosophy and purposes of LLU. Twenty-four focus groups were held which involved over 300 participants from across campus.

*Results:* Ultimately, the majority of participants felt that the symbolism of the message needed to convey an idea that supported the University’s emphasis on *wholeness*, of “service to mankind in Christ,” and “to do as Christ did.” These sentiments were strongly reflected in the participants’ explanations of how they strive to demonstrate a *Bible-based faith* in their everyday interactions with students. Many noted that this is accomplished by openly sharing about faith and personal responsibility, including short reflections and/or devotions before class, and notably in numerous one-to-one interactions with students—something many students as well as faculty and staff refer to as the “special LLU touch”(i.e., access to and time for students to talk to their professors regarding issues ranging from academics, to personal, and to spiritual). All, and especially faculty participants of faith communities other than Seventh-day Adventist, stated that they valued the ability to share their values and beliefs without feeling odd or pressured to do so. All were in agreement that the overall atmosphere and shared value system at LLU was more driven by a Christ-like service orientation than by religious doctrine.

This is not to say that participants did not grapple with letting go of the “Bible-based” wording, even with its varied interpretations. Nearly all acknowledged the importance of having a strong Bible-based foundation. Many stated that LLU should not make apologies or hold back “who we are,” but recognize that this is the reason most students choose to attend LLU. Participants also felt that many of our students, while coming from different faiths, attend LLU to find a spiritual, safe home that is organized around transformational values that will impact their professional preparation and future careers. Others pointed out that for many of our off-campus programs in countries with non-Christian cultures, it was important to insure that final wording be inclusive of *wholeness*.

## Concluding Essay

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In the years to come the learning that has and continues to take place on our campus is likely to be regarded as a notable period of transformational and organizational growth in our history. We now build upon the activities and accomplishments of the capacity review process to address the requirements needed to insure our ability to demonstrate educational effectiveness. Although we consider our institution to be one capable of self-evaluating and intentionally progressive in ways that have led to substantial change, we now realize that this is likely to reveal the need for yet more profound and introspective engagement. This emphasis on learning within the organization reflects our commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) and is directly associated with our need to strengthen the University’s culture of evidence within the context of moving towards a “community of shared excellence.” This effort as having three major foci: (a) strengthening our infrastructure to conduct assessment across diverse academic environments, (b) further implementing SLOs that embrace both the shared and diverse academic nature of the programs, and (c) infusing assessment results into our strategic planning, for CQI in support of our mission. The following outlines our plan:

### ***Strengthening the assessment infrastructure across diverse academic environments.***

**Expansion of the understanding of our normative culture.** Building on the learning derived from our organizational research, we recognize the need to learn how to capitalize on the richness of our shared understanding and appreciation for the mission and purposes of LLU. We did not know the depth to which our University community shared in their

commitment to this institution’s core character—we never assessed...we simply assumed. We now see this is an opportunity to move forward and be purposeful in quantifying a definition for our *normative culture* and use that knowledge to “grow what’s good and challenge what’s weak.”

*Action Plan.* Building on our shared understanding of LLU’s core character, we propose to continue the assessment dialogue of the *normative culture* focus groups. Initially, campus-wide discussions will emphasize the benefits of identifying ourselves with the classifications presented in the research. Those discussions also will address the challenges of other private religiously oriented universities that lost their initial and essential purposes. An understanding of the category that most closely approximates LLU’s *normative culture* will assist in guiding institutional decisions that reflect openness to possible changes while simultaneously maintaining a commitment to our Adventist heritage. This dialogue may provide additional insights as to how we should continue this journey from silos to community, how we choose to expand both globally and locally, as well as how we identify opportunities to capitalize on our shared values, and ultimately, our *mission-focused learning*.

**Infrastructure to support assessment and institutional learning.** Extraordinary progress has been made in building an infrastructure to support the development of shared assessment and learning about our institution. With progress has come an even stronger desire to make sure “we get it right.” For example, rather than relying only on the individual assessment processes that



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<sup>18</sup> University Standardized Online Syllabus Template -  
[http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/classes/course\\_information.php](http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/classes/course_information.php)

<sup>19</sup> *LLU Administrative Handbook*, I-01: “Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action” -  
<http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/administrativehandbook/index.php?dir=I-Personnel/>

<sup>20</sup> *LLU Student Handbook*: p. 56 -  
<http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/documents/2006-07student-handbook.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Online Syllabus Template System -  
[http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/classes/course\\_information.php](http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/classes/course_information.php)

<sup>22</sup> *LLU Student Handbook*, Office of Diversity, p. 40 -  
<http://www.llu.edu/llu/handbook/documents/2006-07student-handbook.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> *LLU Catalog 2008-2009* -  
[http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/publications/view\\_pub.php](http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/publications/view_pub.php)

<sup>24</sup> A recent discovery stimulated by our WASC self-study CPR process has been the awareness that Schools define “programs” differently. Differences in definitions of “programs” even vary within some Schools at the academic department level. Efforts to standardize definitions of such terms as concentrations, tracks, majors, and minors have again re-focused our attention to the need of becoming a more unified and systematic university.

<sup>25</sup> Online Program Review System -  
[http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/programs/academic\\_dashboard.php](http://myllu.llu.edu/apps/acadman/programs/academic_dashboard.php)

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