



# THE LOG

## Divine Word College

September 17  
2019

A Bulletin for the Divine Word College Community

Vol. 39 No. 5

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### Birthday Corner

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### THE PRESIDENT *Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD*

## Constitution Day

Today is Constitution Day, an American federal observance that honors the adoption of the United States Constitution. It is normally observed on September 17, the day in 1787 that delegates to the Constitutional Convention signed the document in Philadelphia. We are required to take note of today's holiday because Divine Word College, and students who are US citizens, receive some funding from the federal government.



The US Constitution begins with the words: "*We the People* of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union..." In the late 1700's, it was rather remarkable to assert that power to establish a constitution came from the people themselves, not from a monarch, nor from religious leaders, nor from a group of powerful individuals. We the people of the United States assert that we can govern ourselves and form ourselves into a more perfect union. It is always a work "in process."

The US Constitution establishes **three branches of government**. Article One deals with the Legislative Branch (the Congress); Article Two deals with the Executive Branch (the President, the Vice President and appointed Officers); Article Three deals with the Judicial Branch (the Supreme Court and lower courts). The three branches are designed to avoid an abuse of power by the other branches. In the past two years, during the presidency of Donald Trump, there have been many instances of the diverse branches attempting to check perceived corruption and abuse of power. Every evening during the national news programs, you can watch as the first three articles of the constitution come into play!



## International Day of Peace

Each year the *International Day of Peace* is observed on 21 September. The observance has been sponsored by the United Nations since 1981, and it is intended to strengthen efforts to live peaceably, within and between nations.



The Dubuque area, for the past ten years, has celebrated a multi-day festival to honor the UN International Day of Peace. This year's festival begins today, and extends until September 29. More information about the many events can be found at: <https://www.dbqdayofpeace.org/>. The theme for this year's festival is *Women Making Peace: Many Voices, Many Languages*. Three events in this year's celebration are particularly notable:

Saturday, September 21 - **Hike to Help Refugees**. Starts: 12:00 pm Starts at Loras College (outside Christ the King Chapel), touch base at University of Dubuque (outside Blades Chapel) and end at Clarke University. Some from our DWC community will be making the hike!

Sunday September 22 – Presentation by Magdalena Gómez, “**Art of Every Day Living as Resistance: Finding Joy in Times of Horror.**” 6:30-8:00pm at Alumni Campus Center, Loras College.

Sunday, September 29 – **Ecumenical Peace Vespers** at Divine Word College. This will be the third year to host the closing event of the Festival. Sr. Paula Schwendinger PBVM (a Matthew 25 Award winner) and Sr. Theresa Marie Tran SCC will be the prayer leaders. Ice cream social to follow!

## Committee Appointments

Most of the DWC committee appointments have been clarified. Many thanks to all who share in the governance of Divine Word College by contributing their ideas, time and enthusiasm in committee work. Committees are where ideas find arms and legs!

The list of appointments is attached.



## HLC Assurance Argument: Criterion 4 – Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The assurance argument for the November visit of the Higher Learning Commission is coming into focus. I have attached the current draft text for Criterion 4: “The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it

evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.” This section presents concerns that have been at the top of the agenda for the past year: Core Competencies, Assessment, Benchmarks, Curriculum Mapping, Program Completion, etc. The vocabulary is quite a mouthful; but the underlying reality is at the heart of our mission at DWC. Questions, comments and suggestions are all welcome.

## VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

*Fr. John Szukalski, SVD*

### Faculty Professional Development

**Ms. Sharon Sinton** and **Ms. Michelle Vargo**, Instructors of ESL in the Intensive English Language Institute, have been granted professional development funding to attend the Michigan TESOL annual conference from November 1-3, 2019 at Grand Valley State University near Grand Rapids, MI.



**Dr. Jason Reed**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Theology & Philosophy, has been granted professional development funding to attend the American Catholic Philosophical Association Meeting from November 21-24, 2019 in Minneapolis, MN.



**Sr. Theresa Marie Tran, SCC**, Instructor of Theology in the Department of Theology & Religious Studies, has been granted professional development funding to attend the Spiritual Companionship for Our Times 2020 conference of Spiritual Directors International from April 23-26, 2020 in Santa Fe, NM.



### Search Committee for Two Full-Time Instructors In English as A Second Language (ESL)

Divine Word College is advertising for two full-time instructors of English as a Second Language (ESL):

- One position will begin on January 9 for ESL Spring Term C 2020
- A second position will begin on August 10 for ESL Fall Term A 2020

The Search Committee, chaired by Dr. Seo Hyun Park, will handle both searches concurrently.

\*Dr. Seo Hyun Park – Chair, Director of the Intensive English Language Institute  
Ms. Michelle Vargo – Instructor of ESL, IELI  
Ms. Gwyneth Gates – Instructor of ESL, IELI  
Dr. Evelyn Dias – Assistant Professor of Music, DIS

## Search Committee for A Full-Time Instructor In Theology & Religious Studies (TRS)

Divine Word College is advertising for a full-time instructor in Theology & Religious Studies (TRS) to start in the Spring Semester on January 13, 2020. The Search Committee will be chaired by Dr. Ron Condon.

\*Dr. Ron Condon – Chair, Department of Theology & Philosophy  
Dr. Jason Reed – Assistant Professor of Philosophy, DTP  
Fr. Nick-Hien Nguyen, SVD – Instructor of Theology, DTP  
Dr. Yasmin Rioux – Assistant Professor of Communication, DIS

## MS. PAOLA ARMFIELD

**Departure** - After the end of the 2019-2020 Academic Year, my husband and I will be moving to North Carolina to begin our training and final preparations to go work and live in the country of Afghanistan as humanitarian workers. After much thought, prayer, and waiting, my husband and I finally know it is time to follow God's calling into our lives to go work and serve cross-culturally. One of my roles there will be as an ESL instructor in an English center run by the NGO. We will work to prepare college students and professionals for higher academic learning in English as a Second Language. I have immensely enjoyed my time at Divine Word. I can truly say it has been one of the most rewarding seasons of my life! I will always be deeply grateful for my students, colleagues, and for all the opportunities we had for growth. Needless to say, whenever I visit Iowa, I will come and share with you stories from that side of the world and what God does there!



## Calendar Events

**ESL Field Trip** – Friday, September 13, 2019  
Galena, IL

ESL 016 & 026 students toured the U.S. Grant home in Galena, IL. The purpose of the trip was for authentic communication and learning related to the topic of housing and rooms as covered in class.

**ESL Field Trip** – Friday, September 13, 2019  
Mines of Spain, IA

ESL 046 students hiked and explored the Mines of Spain Park near Dubuque. The field trip is related to the class unit on parks.

**Faculty Senate** – Tuesday, September 24, 2019



## VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION DEAN OF STUDENTS

*Fr. Bang Tran, SVD*

**Cultural Dinner**—Many thanks to the community of St. Teresa of Avila for such an enjoyable community night with delicious food.

**Liturgical education**—Thursday, September 19, is scheduled for liturgical education, at 1:00 P.M, in room 107. The topic is “Introduction to Liturgy” presented by Fr. Nick Hien Nguyen, SVD.

**Perpetual vows** - Saturday, September 21, four SVD members will profess their perpetual vows as Divine Word Missionaries in Techny, Chicago. Please keep them in your prayers. If you want to participate in this special event, please write your name on the sign-up sheet posted on the Student Board.

**Cross Planting** – Saturday, September 21, you are also invited to participate in planting small white cross in front of our college, coordinated by Sue Lukasik, Tony Grebner and friends. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the Student Board.

**Flu Vaccination** will be given on Tuesday, September 24, in the Art Gallery from 11:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M. For further information, contact Br. Mike Decker, SVD.

## VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS *Mr. Len Uhal*

**Welcome Come and See Visitors** - On Wednesday of this week, the Vocation Office welcomes the first two young men of the semester who will participate in our Come and See program. These men feel God may be calling them to religious life and are interested in learning more about the Divine Word Missionaries and Divine Word College. They will remain on campus until Sunday, September 22. We welcome Khang Anh Tran from Lakewood, Colorado, and Randy Huynh from Webster, Texas. Fr. Anthony will be here all week and serve as their host. Thank you in advance to the entire community for helping them feel at home on our campus.

**Scholarship Opportunity** - Students at universities and colleges always look for scholarships to help them cover expenses related to their education—even at seminaries! Students at Divine Word College are no different. Here is a scholarship opportunity that is available to seminarians here at Divine Word College.

*Msgr. Richard J. Schuler Seminarian Award* - Catholic United Financial Foundation established the Msgr. Richard J. Schuler Seminarian Charitable Fund in 1996 to honor his 30 years as the Spiritual Director of Catholic United Financial and to commemorate his years of priestly service. Although Msgr. Schuler is no longer alive, but his legacy of assisting Seminarians will continue through the Endowment Fund. The application for the 2019 Msgr. Richard J. Schuler Seminarian Award is now available on-line. The application is available by clicking [here](#). All applications should be completed using the online form. The fund is unique in that it provides support to seminarians in genuine financial need to cover basic living expenses, books, transportation, and/or other incidental expenses, not covered by other sources. Grants are awarded annually to seminarians who are studying for the priesthood in the following Dioceses and Archdioceses: St. Paul/ Minneapolis, Bismarck, Crookston, Dubuque, Duluth, Fargo, La Crosse, New Ulm, Rapid City, Saint Cloud, Sioux Falls, Sioux City, Superior, and Winona. The deadline for applications is October 31, 2019.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the office at 651-765-4135 or toll free 877-275-7145.

**Where are they now?** - After a week in Florida, Bro. Duylinh returns to campus to catch his breath and connect with candidates by phone and e-mail. Fr. Anthony will also be on campus this week as he hosts two Come and See visitors. Fr. Adam is on campus early in the week, but will leave for Chicago with Len to attend meetings at CTU and with NRVC later in the week. Fr. Adam will also attend the Final Vow ceremony at Techny on Saturday. Fr. Emilio is in California this week

**LIBRARY DIRECTOR**     *Mr. Daniel Williams*

### Do You Have Your New ID Badge?

Have you seen Divine Word College's new ID badges yet? Do you already have yours? Are you wearing your new badge?

Certainly, you have! All students, faculty, staff, and SVDs should now have their very own, and very new, college ID badges. You should have yours too! Please wear your new badge in class and around the college campus!

Our new ID badges have multiple uses. They identify us as members of the Divine Word College community, provide reliable identification outside of the college, are our college library card, and help with learning names. If you don't think help with learning names is important, just ask Sister Nguyen!

If you still do not have your own ID badge, please come and see Ms. Emily Shedek, in office 222, or Mr. Daniel Williams, in the library, to have your new ID badge printed.



**Garage Sale**

2 - 7 PM Thursday, September 26  
8 AM - 7 PM Friday, September 27  
8 AM - 7 PM Saturday, September 28

**@ Arkfeld House**



Proceeds support Divine Word Missionaries in Chad, Africa



September 27-29 Formator's Workshop – Techny, IL

September 29 Ecumenical Peace Vespers

October 4-5 Board of Trustees Fall Meeting

November 20 Matthew 25 Celebration

An illustration of five doves in various colors (green, blue, yellow, pink) flying towards the right. The dove in the foreground is holding an olive branch with colorful leaves. The background is a light beige color.

Ecumenical  
Prayer for Peace

Sunday, September 29  
7:00 PM - Divine Word College

# ***Committee Membership 2019-2020***

*September 17, 2019*

**Key:**

AP = Appointed by the President

EO = Ex Officio

EFS = Elected by Faculty Senate

## **HLC (HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION) TASK FORCE**

### **Assurance Argument Steering Committee – HLC**

Mathew Kanjirathinkal, Chair, Criteria 1 & 2 (Mission and Integrity)

John Szukalski, SVD, Criterion 3 (Teaching & Learning: Quality, Resources, Support)

Paul Stamm, Criterion 4 (Teaching & Learning: Evaluation & Improvement)

Steve Winger, Criterion 5 (Resources, Planning, Institutional Effectiveness)

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **Admissions Committee**

Len Uhal, Chair (EO)

Ken Anich, SVD (AP) 2019-2020

Seo Hyun Park (EO)

Bang Tran, SVD (EO)

John Szukalski, SVD (EO)

### **Assessment Committee**

\*Paul Stamm, Chair (EO)

\*Yasmin Rioux (AP) 2019-2021

\*Sam Cunningham, SVD, Faculty Member (AP) 2018-2020

Long Phi Nguyen, SVD (AP) 2019-2021

Cathleen Cleary (EO)

Seo Hyun Park (EO)

Ron Condon (EO)

Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth (EO)

*\*Nuclear Body*

### **Board of Administration**

Thomas Ascherman, SVD, President, Chair

John Szukalski, SVD (EO)

Bang Tran, SVD (EO)

Len Uhal (EO)

Steve Winger (EO)

### **Campus Sustainability Committee**

Steve Winger, Chair (EO)

Brian McLauchlin, SVD (AP) 2019-2021

Yasmin Rioux (AP) 2019-2021

Cathleen Cleary (AP) 2019-2021

Mark Singsank (AP) 2019-2021

Thin Cao, SVD (AP) 2019-2020

Baruch Zinsou (AP) 2019-2020



### **Chairs Council**

John Szukalski, SVD, Chair (EO)  
Seo Hyun Park (EO)  
Ron Condon (EO)  
Cathleen Cleary (EO)  
Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth (Registrar) (EO)

### **Emergency Planning Committee**

Steve Winger, Chair (AP) 2017-2020  
Thang Hoang, SVD (EO)  
Sonny de Class, SVD (EO)  
Thomas Ascheman, SVD (EO)  
Bang Tran, SVD (EO)  
Long Phi Nguyen, SVD (EO)  
Bro. Vinh Trinh, SVD (AP) 2017-2020  
Daniel Williams (AP) 2017-2020

### **External Affairs Council**

Tom Ascheman, SVD, Chair (EO)  
Linh Pham, SVD, Development (AP)  
Emily Shedek, Public Relations (AP)  
Mark Singsank, Development (AP)  
Sandy Wilgenbusch, Public Relations (AP)  
Thang Hoang, SVD, Alumni (AP)  
Len Uhal, Vocations Recruitment (AP)

### **Financial Affairs Committee**

Marlene Decker, Chair (EO)  
Len Uhal (EO)  
Steven Winger (EO)  
Carolyn Waechter (EO)  
John Szukalski, SVD (AP)  
Linh Pham, SVD (EO)

### **Food Service Committee**

Steve Winger, VP for Operations, Chair (AP)  
Bang Tran, SVD, Dean of Students (AP)  
Brenda Williams, Food Service Director (AP)  
Phyllis Urbain (AP)  
Sr. Phuong Tran, LHC (AP) 2019-20

### **Graduation Committee**

Sandy Wilgenbusch, Chair (AP)  
John Szukalski, SVD (EO)  
Sonny de Class, SVD (EO)  
Evelyn Dias (EO)  
Bang Tran, SVD (EO)  
Tomerot Lambert (AP) 2019-20

### **Formation and Student Life Committee**

Bang Tran, SVD, Chair (EO)  
Megan Sutton (EO)  
Sonny deClass, SVD (EO)  
Mike Decker, SVD (EO)  
Thang Hoang, SVD (EO)  
Long Phi Nguyen, SVD (EO)  
Nick Nguyen, SVD (EO)  
Stephen Kha Nguyen, SVD (EO)  
Sr. Theresa Marie Tran, SCC (EO)  
Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS (EO)  
Jason Reed – non-voting (AP) 2019-20  
Friday Onoja – non-voting (AP) 2019-20  
Tomerot Lambert – non-voting (AP) 2019-20  
Sr. Hien Nguyen, LHC – non-voting (AP) 2019-20

*(Appointed members are nominated by the Formation Team.)*

### **Information Systems Committee**

Brad Florence, Chair (EO)  
Daniel Williams (EO)  
Steve Winger (EO)  
Paul Stamm (EO)  
Son Le, SVD (AP) 2019-21  
Mark Varghese (AP) 2019-20

### **Institutional Review Board (Research)**

Ken Anich, SVD, Chair (AP)  
Cathleen Cleary (AP)  
Sam Cunningham, SVD (AP)

### **Library Council**

Daniel Williams, Chair (EO)  
Tony Kreinus, SVD (EO)  
Sam Cunningham, SVD, Interdisc. Studies (AP) 2018-20  
Jason Reed, Theology-Philosophy (AP) 2019-21  
Sam Lollar 2019-20

### **Liturgy Committee**

Sonny DeClass, SVD, Chair (EO)  
Khoa Nguyen, SVD, Assistant Chaplain (EO)  
Evelyn Dias, Liturgical Music Coord. (EO)  
Thang Hoang, SVD, Rector (EO)  
Long Phi Nguyen, SVD, Associate Dean (EO)  
Jill Heitzman (AP) 2019-20  
Frt. John Pinda Neto SVD, Student member 2019-20  
Sr. Thanh Thy Nguyen, Student Member 2019-20

**Newsletter and Social Media Committee**

- Sandy Wilgenbusch (EO)
- Emily Shedek (EO)
- Richard Garrett (AP) 2019-21
- Donna Puccio (EO)
- Mark Singsank (EO)
- Linh Pham, SVD (EO)
- Fr. Martin Tin Vu, SVD (AP) 2019-20

**Scholarship Advisory Committee**

- Tom Ascherman, SVD, Chair (EO)
- Len Uhal, VP for Admissions (EO)
- Carolyn Waechter, Financial Aid Coordinator (EO)
- Bang Tran, SVD, VP for Formation (EO)

**Website Review Committee**

- Sandy Wilgenbusch, Chair, (AP)
- Emily Shedek (AP)
- John Szukalski, SVD (AP)
- Len Uhal (AP)
- Son Le, SVD (AP)

**INTERIM COMMITTEES**

**Interim Academic Appeals Committee**

- ??? Faculty Member (EFS) TBD
- ??? Faculty Member (EFS) TBD
- ??? Faculty Member (EFS) TBD

**Interim Formation Appeals Committee**

- ??? Formator SVD, Chair TBD
  - ??? Formator TBD
  - ??? Formator TBD
  - ??? Student Member TBD
  - ??? Student Member TBD
- (Members are nominated by the Formation Team.)*

**Interim Faculty Promotions and Awards Committee**

- ??? Faculty member, Chair (EFS) TBD
- ??? Faculty member (EFS) TBD
- ??? Faculty member (EFS) TBD
- ??? Faculty member (EFS) TBD
- ??? Faculty member (EFS) TBD

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **Spiritual Directors**

Nick Hien Nguyen, SVD, Coordinator

James Bergin, SVD

Sam Cunningham, SVD

Ed Peklo, SVD

Sr. Theresa Marie Tran, SCC

Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS

### **Student Senate Officers – 2018-2019**

**President:** Friday Onoja

**Vice President:** Tomerot Lambert

**Secretary:** Sam Lollar

**Treasurer:** Joubert Felix



## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Argument

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Divine Word College has always taken seriously its [Mission](#) to educate men and women for missionary service. There is a growing understanding and ever more positive environment around the use of assessment as a method of enhancing student learning. As the college has increased its focus on meaningful assessment practices, the faculty are taking a more active role in the analysis of assessment results. The Assessment Committee continually looks for better ways to assess learning objectives and the College has developed pedagogies to better meet institutional and program outcomes. To organize and formalize the assessment practices, the Assessment Committee has been drafting an [Assessment Handbook](#).

### Core Components

**4.A The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.**

As articulated in the October 2018 [report](#) to the Academic Committee of the DWC Board of Trustees, the College strives for the ongoing improvement of all of its educational programs by evaluating existing assessment measures, seeking better assessment vehicles and developing consultative practices.

### **1. Regular program reviews.**

In 2008 Divine Word College initiated a formal system of rotating program reviews consisting of an internal self-study report, an external program review, and the development of an action plan. The practice was further clarified in the 2010 revision of the [Guidelines for External Reviews of Academic Programs](#). Each of the college's five identified academic areas is on a five year rotating schedule for undertaking the review process. The current rotation, as articulated in the March 28, 2018 VPAA memo is as follows.

2017-2018 English as a Second Language (ESL)

2018-2019 Theology and Religious Studies (TRS)

2019-2020 Intercultural Studies (ICS)

2020-2021 Philosophy (PHI)

2021-2022 Core Curriculum (CORE)

The review process begins each Fall semester with an Internal Self-Study Report. Each implementation has a detailed time-line calendar and a comprehensive listing of required elements. Program reviews, individual observations, and collected assessment data are reviewed and discussed in the regularly scheduled department meetings. The intent is to come to an understanding of program strengths and weaknesses. The programs also put forward recommendations for the acquisition of external professional resources from the appropriate academic fields for use in the following semester. Based on these recommendations, in the fall semester, the Vice President for Academic Affairs contracts two or three outside, professional experts to examine the specifics of the academic program. These professionals, usually senior faculty or department chairs from outside institutions, are given extensive documentation about the Divine Word College program's intent, assessment data, and curriculum. The external review is given focus by a formally drafted directive: Guidelines for [External Reviews of Academic Programs](#). In the Spring semester, the external reviewers do an on-campus visit for direct collection of data from individual program faculty, current students, and from the administrative leadership; including the Department Chair head, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the college President. Early in the Spring semester the external reviewers share their written report with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and all members of the department. For the remainder of the Spring semester, the academic program is tasked with synthesizing the findings from the external and internal reviews and developing an action plan to carry-out the findings. Before the conclusion of the Spring semester the academic area is expected to complete the "Action Planning in Response to External Program Review" process and submit their results to the VPAA. The expectation is that by the following Fall semester, the

program will begin to modify, improve, and enhance the curriculum and student learning based upon the faculty drafted action plan.

The review process validates program benchmarks in relation to similar programs offered at peer institutions. Recommendations resulting from previous reviews have led to substantial changes in the [Core Curriculum](#) (formerly called General Education) as well as the [ESL program](#). The process triggers and supports the College's two departments' and IELI's efforts to improve their educational programs while responding to the continually changing needs of the student body. The co-curricular [Religious Formation Program](#) is similarly, but separately directed and reviewed by the Tri-Province Formation Commission of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

The institutional impact of this program review process can be seen in the recently completed ESL [review](#) and [action plan](#) and the current year's [Theology and Religious Studies](#) self-study and external review reports.

The Intensive English Language Institute's [review](#) was so intensive and thorough that the entire ESL program embarked on a complete makeover. The IELI enrollment number is comparable to all of the undergraduate programs and was intended to directly support foreign-language DWC college applicants who require English language skills before beginning their college work. 66% of students who matriculated into the undergraduate program (and departed the College between 2014-2019) began their studies in the IELI. As a result of the comprehensive ESL program review, multiple changes were implemented, [including](#); a new eight-week term delivery format, a new vertically coherent curriculum, additional faculty, and additional instructional resources. All of the relevant action items were implemented in the Fall of AY 2018-2019, including the initial steps for complete membership in English USA program of the American Association of Intensive English Programs. The DWC ESL program is working through [a two year process](#) of preparing for specialized accreditation from the CEA (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation). With our continually more diverse enrollment, DWC's English language program has also been approved by SACM (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission).

## **2. The Evaluation of Credit Transfers.**

Divine Word College maintains [undergraduate policies](#) that assure that its courses meet national standards, including the Federal Credit Hour Definition, and the Registrar's Office in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs scrutinizes course offerings for compliance. The IELI, as a pre-baccalaureate ESL program, does not accept transfer credits, but has an intensive [practice](#) for determining student placement in the various course levels. For the undergraduate program, in addition to requiring an official transcript from previously attended institutions, requires all transfer credits to be evaluated according to their fit and equivalence to specific courses at DWC as stated in detail in the [College Catalog](#).

A student transferring from another institution of higher learning must complete at least one full year residence as a full-time student at DWC in order to receive a degree. No more than twelve credit hours total may be transferred into the DWC major. All requirements must be met for the DWC major and minor, though a corresponding minor taken at the first institution might be approved as sufficient.

### **3. The quality of transfer credits.**

As stated above, the College policy regarding transfer credit is clearly laid out in the [College Catalog](#). Incoming students wishing to transfer credits must provide official transcripts as well as an official course description or syllabus for each course that they intend on transferring. The Registrar, department faculty, and the VP for Academic Affairs review requests for transfer credits.

The Registrar, in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, makes a preliminary assessment of the transfer credit and how they might transfer to a student's degree plan. Ultimate responsibility for rendering a judgment about credit transfer requests rests primarily with the Department Chairs in consultation with the program faculty who are experts in the content of the courses.

Divine Word College has a large number of applicants from outside of the United States. Requests for transfer of credit from international institutions follow the same procedure as above with the exception that the Office of the Registrar might have a third-party evaluation of international transcripts by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO, Office of International Education, Credentials Analysis Service). The Office of the Registrar regularly uses the AACRAO EDGE (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers' Electronic Database for Global Education) to determine the scope and validity of international academic documents.

Under limited circumstances, enrolled DWC students may be [allowed credit](#) from courses taken at other institutions. Courses may only be taken at other accredited institutions to fulfill DWC academic requirements. Approval for taking the course, must be granted before the student begins the class. The student needs to file the request with their academic advisor and include the course description. Final approval to take an outside course for credit is granted only the Vice President for Academic Affairs. These courses are considered as courses taken in residence and computed in the student's Grade Point Average.

### **4. Institutional authority over prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs.**

Course prerequisites are clearly listed for specific courses in the College Catalog for student and academic advisor use and periodically reviewed at the time of Catalog annual renewal. While previous college catalogs were issued for a three year cycle, starting in AY 2016 the college now issues a new version of the catalog prior to the start of each school year. The catalog is made available on the [DWC website](#). Prerequisites are first determined by the faculty at the Department level as they are appropriate to maximizing the learning experiences in the course. Prerequisites are regularly reviewed by the faculty, as is the case with all required courses.



For the undergraduate program the course numbering system reflects the level of knowledge and rigor expected for the course. 100-level courses provide introductory content necessary for the student to learn key concepts, terms, and methodologies necessary for higher-level academic study in the subject matter. Course numbers of 200 – 400 in the College Catalog indicate the ideal standing level when a course should be taken, while the second and third digits of numbers indicate further divisions of the topics. 200 and 300 courses normally build on knowledge obtained from the 100-level courses and may have prerequisites. 400-level courses are advanced level and also include independent and seminar courses. Course numbers beginning with “0” are non-credit and developmental in nature for students needing improved knowledge and skill-sets to succeed in their undergraduate work.

The IELI program utilizes its own [course numbering system](#). The third digit is reflective of a specific skill set (all courses ending in “2” focus on writing skills, while course numbers ending in “5” indicate courses emphasizing reading, and “6” communications). The second digit reflects the eight program levels of language proficiency.

The undergraduate courses at Divine Word College are specifically designed to give students a broad liberal arts background with an emphasis on developing intercultural competence and preparation for future ministries within the Roman Catholic Church tradition. Many of the courses are also designed to meet requirements set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in its [Program of Priestly Formation](#) 5th.ed. and requirements set forth by the Society of the Divine Word for its future members. An SVD emphasis on [prophetic dialogue](#), missionary goals and interculturality has been designed into many of the courses.

Since the College began to accept religious sisters as well as lay students, further course work has been designed, particularly in the Theology/Religious Studies Degree Program, to meet the future needs of these students in various ministries of the Church. [Course syllabi](#) are expected to state Core Competencies SLOs, degree SLOs and course specific skills that will be addressed in the class. Over the course of the last three years, all academic departments have written and implemented shared program SLOs that are used in a number of assessment tools to measure learning progress. For summative assessments, these program SLOs are measured in specific, required senior-level seminar classes and capstone projects. For formative assessments, the program SLOs and a set of institutional SLOs are measured at the end of each semester as a part of the course evaluation process. The data gathered from these assessment tools is analyzed both by individual departments and through the college-established Assessment Committee for the purpose of developing improvements in curriculum. The newly created position of [Director of Institutional Effectiveness](#) coordinates the processes.

The college is in the process of implementing a new set of Core Competencies, based upon the college mission statement and reflecting the original intent the previous institutional SLOs. The [Core Competency](#) approach was developed throughout the 2018-2019 academic year. After multiple faculty meetings and in-services, these new institutional learning goals were formally approved by the Board of Administration and the Board of Trustees in May 2019. The implementation of the Core Competency Student Learning Outcomes (CC-SLOs) began in the fall of AY 2019-2020 with the issuance of the initial curriculum map. [Calendaring](#) has already

been formulated to guide the CC-SLO mapping through the AY2019-2020 meetings of the academic departments.

Expectations for student learning are detailed at the course level. All course [syllabi](#) are reviewed by Department Chairs for rigor and adherence to the requirements established by College administration and faculty. Syllabi are submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and subsequently made available to all faculty through the college's network file system. New courses are designed by interested faculty and then presented and approved at the Department level for their appropriateness to the College Mission and the institutional and program SLOs. A proposed new course then must be vetted by the Chairs Council. Major changes to the curriculum must also be approved by the Faculty Senate before being endorsed by both the Board of Administration and ultimately by the Board of Trustees.

Learning resources include a substantial, openly accessible library collection; a student resource center; a 24/7 computer lab; and a newly implemented community-based tutoring system for ESL students.

Divine Word College invests heavily in maintaining an excellent library collection appropriate for its Mission and for student research and study. Faculty members are regularly invited to recommend new acquisitions. The library also maintains access to and promotes on-line resources and data bases. The library is open 24/7 for student access. Within the last two years there has been a systematic culling of books, that allowed faculty members to remove outdated materials and recommend subject areas that could benefit from expanded purchases. A major project to automate check-out and inventory control has resulted in barcoding all materials to allow for easier tracking and information gathering on library use.

The [Student Resource Center](#) is directed by faculty, uses [student mentors](#) and faculty volunteers, and offers specialized training seminars. The [Literary Training Workshops](#) have specialized on academic and professional writing, including essay writing and free-style creative projects.

There are two open-access computer labs that have 36 up-to-date computers, multiple printers, and audio/visual projection. The Information Systems Director and a part-time technology assistant are responsible for developing and maintaining the college-wide, wireless internet and the various software systems. A Director of Instructional Technology assists faculty with technology issues and coordinates the college's course management system. Open wireless connectivity is available throughout the campus, including student residences.

The IELI mentoring program provides for regularly scheduled [conversations](#) with native speakers both from the local community and the teacher training program of nearby [Emmaus Bible College](#).

Faculty qualifications are vetted by search committees and official transcripts are required of new hires. The hiring process for new faculty helps ensure a highly qualified faculty. The process for faculty recruitment and appointment is clearly outlined in the Faculty Handbook, Article 206ff. A Search Committee is established, in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, by the Department Chair searching for the new instructor. The Search

Committee consists of the Department Chair, at least one other member of the same Department, and at least one member from a different Department. Additional members may be added to the Search Committee when further expertise is desired. Candidates' references are checked by the Search Committee prior to contacting the candidates for interviews. Faculty credentials, including resumes and official copies of their transcripts, are maintained in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Faculty degrees and international experiences are publicly shared online and in the college catalog. Given the nature and purpose of DWC, special attention is given to the intercultural experience of faculty members. The Provincial of the Chicago Province of the Society of the Divine Word, who also serves as Chair of the Board of Trustees, may also appoint qualified faculty who are members of the Society of the Divine Word in consultation with the College President and the VP for Academic Affairs.

At this point the College has no dual credit courses or programs for high school students, however the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan does call for an exploration of such, which is currently ongoing..

### **5. Specialized accreditation.**

The question of specialized undergraduate accreditation is not applicable at this time. The College will pursue specialized ESL accreditation by the CEA (Commission on English Language Program Accreditation).

### **6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates related to its mission.**

The College maintains informal collection of the success of its graduates. Given the College's small size, it is fairly easy to maintain contact with graduates who are accepted to the SVD Novitiate and then to theological studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. An [analysis](#) of DWC graduates shows a high number of DWC graduates do move on to further studies at other institutions. During the past 10 years, 54.2% of the SVD candidates who graduated from DWC entered the next level of formation, that is, the Novitiate, and 67.3% of all graduates were accepted into further degree-seeking studies. Of our female students, fully 95% of them arrive at the college having already taken religious vows. Upon completion of their college degree-work, many of the sisters return to their religious orders to more fully carry on their missionary activities, but a significant number go on to graduate schools. As most recently [reported](#), 79% of DWC undergraduate students complete their studies, and slightly more than 70% of DWC graduates continue on to graduate level programs.

Contact with international alumni is complicated because those already in professed vows return to missionary work in their home countries. Previously DWC did not have a specific office responsible for remaining in contact with them. This function was performed by an Alumni Association, staffed by a part-time alumnus who was hired and paid by the Chicago Provincial office. This Alumni Association traditionally worked largely with alumni of the now-defunct SVD system of high schools. Recognizing the importance and value of greater alumni contact, in 2018 the College established a new Alumni Coordinator position to consolidate the previous alumni record keeping and build a comprehensive communication system with DWC alumni.

The College, under the auspices of the VP for Admissions, who is also the [Retention Coordinator](#), has undertaken a comprehensive exit interview for students withdrawing, graduating, or completing their specific program. The exit interview includes both a [survey](#) of opinions and a structured, one-on-one [interview](#). This interview process has allowed for immediate and comprehensive data regarding students' experiences ([AY2018-2019](#)). At the completion of the 2017-2018 academic year, 100% of those graduating, completing a program, or withdrawing participated in the exit interview. The information gleaned from these interviews is presented to the Board of Administration, which directs the appropriate departments in the College to respond to any issues raised. The information is also presented to the College faculty, the religious Formators, and members of the college's Assessment Committee.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Argument

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#### **4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.**

Divine Word College has demonstrated a [commitment to the analysis](#) of student progress and the use of that data for the improvement of teaching and learning across all levels of the organization. In the past the school has employed more than twenty assessment tools and procedures for formative and summative assessments at the course, program and institutional levels. Starting in the AY 2016-2017 various college committees and work groups began a systematic review of the assessment tools to ensure that all instruments were being used effectively. As a part of that review and in reaction to the concerns expressed in the [HLC Letter](#), DWC instituted a new Office of Institutional Effectiveness. A new staffing position of [Director of Institutional Effectiveness](#) was filled in the Spring of 2018 and has been empowered to review, reconcile, and analyze all of DWC's assessment practices.

As [reported](#) to the school's Board of Trustees, the school is moving forward with five assessment goals: the development and use of an updated set of institutional SLOs based upon core competencies, revising the existing course evaluation process, compiling documentation on all assessment practices, instituting curriculum mapping based on the revision of both institutional and program SLOs, and shifting the attitudinal environment around the use of assessments.

**Development of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes.** In previous academic years a great deal of effort had been expended in building a consensus around a set of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes. These ISLOs, as articulated in the previous [college catalogs](#) and universally applied in all course syllabi, were measured in automated term-based course evaluations and program-based summative assessments, including Department capstone projects and senior seminar courses. The results of these ISLO measurements were used to focus instruction on seven principals. After multiple years of use, it became obvious these original ISLOs were too vague to provide statistically accurate information. The Vice President for

Academic Affairs attendance at the April 2018 HLC annual conference solidified the need for measurable institutional outcomes derived directly from the college's Mission Statement. Additionally, participation in the July 2018 Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education annual conference suggested the need for more tightly focused ISLOs. As a result, a primary focus of the 2018-2019 AY was the acceptance of a set of Core Competencies drawn directly from the school's mission statement and the development of a new, more clearly-drafted, set of five ISLOs. The competencies and corresponding student learning outcomes are articulated in the current [College Catalog](#).

**Revised Course Evaluations.** By AY 2016-2017, the results of the automated course evaluation process became questionable. Given the small class sizes and the judgment-inducing questions on the course evaluations, there was reason to question the validity of any received results. A statistical analysis of the results indicated that only the most extreme results could be reliably counted upon for significance. Starting in the middle of the AY 2017-18, both the ESL and the undergraduate programs began a comprehensive drafting of new questions for the Course Evaluations. The IELI and an Ad Hoc Course Evaluation Committee of the Faculty Senate met several times with the College's Assessment Committee and worked through a series of questions ranging from judgmental evaluations of faculty performance to evaluative enquiries into the learning process. The new questions ([undergraduate](#) and [ESL](#)) are designed to elicit similar data as the previous questions, but without the confrontational language that had made the old course evaluations ineffective. The revisions were instituted starting in the Fall of AY 2018-2019. ([VPAA Memo 8 October 2018](#)).

**Documenting Assessment Practices.** For more than a decade, DWC had instituted a wide-variety of assessment tools and practices designed to measure student learning. While the results had been used to inform faculty and assist administrative decision making, there had been limited codification of the practices or examination of their efficacy. The Assessment Committee [identified](#) more than twenty evaluative practices and requested that the appropriate faculty/staff administrators conduct a S.M.A.R.T analysis for each of them. Throughout the AY 2018-19 the Office of Institutional Effectiveness received formally derived descriptions of each process and began culling unused and ineffective assessment tools. This process has led to the initial drafting of college [Assessment Handbook](#). The ultimate goal is to better use staff time strengthening the effective instruments.

**Instituting Curriculum Mapping.** Course mapping was introduced to the undergraduate faculty in AY 2015- 2016, but time constraints made the process burdensome and it was never fully implemented at the institutional level. In an on-going and annual basis, program development was a key function in Department meetings and there were a number of successful changes made to the curriculum, but the process was not systematic. The IELI's development of a new eight-week term curriculum had been focused on a use of vertical mapping for basic English skills acquisition. The [IELI course mapping](#) is conducted using the in-house developed [IELI Curriculum Inventory Form](#). In the undergraduate program, concurrent with the development of new institutional SLOs, a system of benchmarked course mapping was [introduced](#). Beginning in the spring of AY 2018-2019, all academic departments were [tasked with initial mapping](#) using ISLOs based upon distinctly articulated Core Competencies drawn from the school's mission statement and measured using a four-part milestone criteria.

**Shifting Attitudinal Environment.** The fifth major initiative consists of trying to change the attitude surrounding assessment activities. Some DWC faculty had viewed assessment as an externally imposed obligation. Government reporting and accreditation processes were seen as the impetus for extensive work in collecting and reporting statistics. Frank discussions within the Assessment Committee and the faculty as a whole has focused on the need to shift the language from “we must,” “the government requires,” “our accreditors insist,” to language that stresses the shared values of all educators: “helping our students to learn,” “discovering new information,” and “improving those who have been entrusted to us.” The previous release of collected data was articulated in ways that could be seen as judgmental of faculty performance or negatively critical of students’ success. A much more [supportive and objective environment](#) has been fostered through formal in-services, frank explanations of the statistical meaningfulness of results, and a more clear verbiage as to the role and goals of assessment. The on-going revision and consolidation of the Administrative, Faculty, and Staff handbooks has allowed a more positive definition of the role of assessment.

Although all existing assessment instruments are under review, the college continues to pursue: annual faculty evaluation reports; regularly scheduled External Program Evaluation reports; extensive Student Exit Interviews; multiple Religious Formation Program Assessments (including a standardized RFPO-A); Senior Capstone assessments; separate placement testing for math, English skills and Theology knowledge; Alumni follow-up reportage; and use of the standardized CaMLA English Placement Test (Cambridge Michigan Language Assessment) and CCTST (California Critical Thinking Skills Test).

The CaMLA EPT (English Placement Test) is a primary standard for the IELI's [determination of placement levels](#) and successful completion of the English as a Second Language program. The IELI uses a clearly articulated [schema](#) for both placement and promotion. As a method of institutional assessment, the EPT has only recently been implemented, so no assessment data has been analyzed, however, the ESL program has a [fully developed process](#) for using the CaMLA EPT as a benchmarking tool.

The ongoing use of the CCTST (California Critical Thinking Skills Test) is illustrative of how DWC is using assessment to enhance student learning. With the AY 2014 - 2015, the Assessment Committee began using the CCTST as an external measure of skills critical to future Church leaders and to academic success. The test is administered to all freshmen in January and again to graduating seniors and exiting special undergraduate students as a measure of development in this area. Although initial results were very low and of questionable validity given the high percentage of foreign students who are not native English speakers, every year since the school has explored some additional faculty training on pedagogic methods for improving critical thinking. In the spring of AY 2017-2018, after four years of administering the CCTST, the school had its first completed cohort of results, which were [shared](#) through a Faculty Senate meeting. Student exit scores continue to be lower than would be desirable for native-speaking students, but the cohort demonstrated a modest improvement across four of the five tested areas. In the fall of AY 2018-19, the [results](#) of the testing were again shared with the entire body of the faculty Senate and an explanation of the two weakest areas was proffered with recommendations for added emphasis on analysis and evaluation skills in the classrooms. The

most recent [results](#) comparing all incoming freshman to all graduating seniors has been shared in the [Assessment Committee](#) meetings with the Department Chairs.

### **1. Clearly stated goals for student learning, assessment of student learning, and achievement of learning goals.**

Formative and summative assessment is a goal for all courses at Divine Word College. Every course syllabus lists the relevant institutional SLOs along with the specific program and course outcomes. While the transition to Core Competency SLOs has only just begun, the college is carefully [monitoring](#) the process. Course assessments include scheduled tests, final exams, research and reflection papers, class presentations, student produced videos and class projects. The College's grading system, as specified in the [college catalog](#) and implemented in the school's learning management system, informs students of their progress as soon as assignments are evaluated, which encourages discussions with the instructor regarding his/her progress and facilitates the improvement of the student outcomes.

Each program, including the [Religious Formation Program](#), has established Program SLOs, and each has established assessment processes that are regularly reviewed at the Department level and by the College-wide Assessment Committee at the beginning or conclusion of each academic year. Programs use assessment data to improve the curriculum, a process that is encouraged through the regular program review.

A program of personal formation is a critically important part of a Catholic seminary education. Religious formation at the College is guided by the Formation Committee, which is comprised of the Formators, the College Counselors, the Coordinator of Spiritual Direction, a representative member of the teaching faculty, and two student representatives. Assessment is conducted with the use of internally-designed instruments by which the candidates, their peers, and Formators assess the candidates and the Formation Program. The Religious Formation Program (RFP) at the College has developed over the past fifty years as part of the preparation for life as a Divine Word Missionary and in response to various mandates from ecclesiastical authority. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' [Program for Priestly Formation \(PPF, 5th Edition\)](#), the primary guide for American seminaries, notes the importance of college seminaries such as DWC incorporating into their formation programs the charism or unique heritage of their order. Each student meets with his/her Formator to set personal growth goals for the semester. The Formator also meets privately with each student twice a semester to discuss student progress. Assessment of students and programs includes the following: End-of-the-year Self-Evaluation by the student, a battery of [psychological tests](#) as a requirement for entrance into the Novitiate, [Votatio Evaluations](#) by members of the SVD, faculty recommendations and [Ministries Program Evaluation. Analysis](#) of the scores of successive classes of candidates has proved to be the single most important measure of institutional effectiveness. As data have accumulated and as Formators and candidates have become familiar with the revised instrument, it has been [reviewed annually](#).

### **2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.**

A major undertaking of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness is to formally clarify and codify the more than two dozen assessment practices currently in use. The individual currently managing each of those tools has been asked to supply information on the assessments: purpose, definition, ownership, implementations, methods of analysis, distribution of results, impacts on institution, strengths and weaknesses. As this documentation is being collected, it has been shared with the Assessment Committee for their analysis and discernment. The in-process, draft version of the college's [Assessment Handbook](#) lists the individuals responsible for assessments and the specific assessments they are reporting on.

- Assessment Committee Chair - California Critical Thinking Skills Test
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- Director of Institutional Effectiveness - Institutional SLO Course Evaluations, Course Mapping
- Department Chair Theology and Religious Studies - Philosophy Program SLO Course Evaluations, TRS Program SLO Course Evaluations, Faculty Program Evaluation Reports for the VPAA, Philosophy Senior Synthesis Capstone Projects, TRS Senior Synthesis Capstone Projects, Test of Basic-Intermediate Theology (TOBIT), Philosophy Senior Seminar PHI 498, Supervisory Observations
- Department Chair Interdisciplinary Studies - ICS Program SLO Course Evaluations, Faculty Program Evaluation Reports for the VPAA, ICS Senior Synthesis Capstone Projects, Supervisory Observations,
- Director Intensive English Language Institute - IELI SLO Evaluations, Faculty Program Evaluation Reports for the VPAA, Annual Faculty Evaluations, IELI Curriculum Inventory Form, CaMLA, Benchmarks for Placement and Promotion, IELI Course Evaluations
- Vice President for Academic Affairs - External Program Evaluation Reports, Faculty Service Reports
- Vice President for Admissions - Student Exit Interviews
- Formation Counselor - Religious Formation Program – Assessment (RFP-A), Additional Formation Program Assessments
- Alumnae Coordinator - Alumni Reportage

### **3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

The school's assessment tools have largely been formulated, generated, and implemented in a very compartmentalized manner, within administrative units. Without coordination there has been a fair amount of redundancy, limited distribution of results, and uncertainty concerning authorization for implementation. The collective building of new Core Competency SLOs and institution-wide curriculum mapping will bring together many of the existing assessment practices in a more effective manner. The previous disparate assessment practices have nevertheless yielded substantial advancement in teaching methods and approaches to student learning.

Each program area has understood that assessment is a powerful tool that can change teaching or other practices to encourage greater growth in learning. Over the years, the Intensive English



Language Institute has made numerous changes to its structure and its methodology in response to the assessment of its students. The Religious Formation Program was totally re-written, and it now includes methods of assessment and other activities. Similarly, the Intercultural Studies program has used the assessment of its comprehensive papers and tests to change to the [capstone course](#) and presentation as well as to change some of the materials taught in ICS courses. In response to poor or inconsistent performance in earlier assessment measures, ICS restructured the entire program, adding specialized courses in [Globalization](#) and [Methods of Research](#). The Philosophy program has also adopted the [capstone project](#) and a two-credit synthesis course as its assessment in order to be in line with the other two majors. This coordination led to the combining of the [Theology and Religious Studies Department](#) and the Philosophy Department into the new Department of Theology and Philosophy. The institutional implementation of a [Common Writing Rubric](#) has brought about a greater emphasis on writing across the curriculum and the [initiation of a pilot program](#) of intensive writing courses.

#### **4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.**

The school has become active in the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education and on multiple occasions shared a revitalized approach to assessment practices before the entire Faculty Senate ([AALHE Report](#), [CCTST Results](#)) and in specialized faculty [in-services](#). For AY2018-2019 there was a full-day Faculty Institute on teaching critical thinking skills and four half-day Faculty In-services covering assessment perspectives, effective SLOs, Core Competencies, undergraduate and IELI curriculum mapping). All faculty and Religious Formation Program (RFP) Formators understand that assessment involves everyone. In AY 2018-19 the organization of the [College Assessment Committee](#) was expanded and revised to include both a nuclear and a plenary committee structure. The nuclear subcommittee is tasked with the functional operations of the Assessment Committee and consists of the Assessment Chair, appointed by the College President and two faculty members, also appointed by the President, after consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Those three individuals are also part of the larger plenary Assessment Committee which is tasked with making recommendations to the college administration and reporting out to the Faculty Senate. Other members of the plenary group are the Chairs of both Departments, the Director of the IELI, the college Registrar and two faculty members and a member of the Formation and Student Life Committee.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Argument

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#### **4.C. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.**

The Mission of Divine Word College is to prepare young men and women for missionary service, especially for the Society of the Divine Word. Because this is a lifetime commitment involving the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to a particular kind of profession, it is not for everyone. Students come to DWC to discern if they truly want to commit themselves to this kind of life. One role of the College, then, is to help its students discern their vocation and understand what a religious missionary life entails. Through its academic program, its [Religious Formation program](#) (RFP), and its [Apostolic Ministries](#) program, the College challenges students in their faith and provides information on a wide spectrum of ministries in the Church. Some students rightly determine that becoming a religious priest, brother, or sister is not their vocation. When this happens, the students transfer to schools where they may pursue other careers. For DWC this is not a failure in retention. Rather it is a success in helping a student discover that his/her gifts and interests lie elsewhere and in guiding them to another kind of vocational choice. After graduating from DWC, many students enter the Novitiate; upon completion of the Novitiate they profess vows in the SVD. Withdrawing from the SVD at a later stage in their life journey means a more significant change and the need to retool one's education and skills. So it is far better that men/women realize sooner rather than later that they are called elsewhere.

#### **1. The institution has defined goals for student retention.**

Although the school recognizes that a discernment which prompts a student to leave Divine Word College is a success, the school's actual retention rate is high at 79% since 2007. In both 2015 and 2017, using IPEDS derived measures the retention rate was over 80%. In May of 2018 the College Board of Trustees approved a new [Strategic Plan](#) that focuses on the ambitious enrollment target of 125 for the overall student population including 50 for SVD candidates. To attain this 16% increase in student enrollment, the school has initiated an organizational restructuring of admissions functions, enhanced recruitment efforts, and is in the process of establishing of two new certificate programs. To ensure progress on all of these initiatives, the DWC Board of Administration issues a [Progress Report](#) each fall.

## **2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.**

The College has been keeping records on [retention](#) since 2001. A Retention Coordinator has helped to assure that students whose gifts and vocations are appropriate to the mission of the College are encouraged to stay. Dr. Ken Anich's [early research](#) on retention helped the College focus on strengthening academic advising. More recently, the research on retention has been moved to the Admissions Office under the direction of Mr. Len Uhal, VP for Admissions. This serves a dual purpose of tracking retention and also bringing to potential-student issues to the awareness of the college recruiters.

Documentation of previous [retention](#), persistence and [completion](#) rates have always been strong. Since August of 2018 the reporting has been systematic. The school has kept and used data from the U.S. Department of Education's Financial and Non-Financial Indicator Process. Although the seven non-financial standards had always been met or excelled, before 2016 there had been a concern about the small number of degrees awarded. This numeric confusion was triggered by a change in the way post-baccalaureate ESL students had been previously accounted for. In August of 2018 a comprehensive [predictive set of reports](#) was prepared using the U.S. Department of Education's Financial and Non-Financial Indicator Process. Prepared by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, this documentation ([Enrollment Changes](#), [Degrees Awarded](#), [Full-time Faculty Changes](#), [Student Default Rates](#), [Minimal Full-time Faculty](#), [Student to Teacher Ratio](#), [Weak Graduation and Persistence Rates](#)) was shared with the school administration.

## **3. The institution utilizes information on student retention.**

Focus on student retention and academic needs has led to a number of initiatives. The school has worked to increase opportunities for taking elective courses. An [Associate's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) has allowed students another option for obtaining a degree if they decide to withdraw before earning a B.A. Because the college recognized the English language needs of our students, the DWC established a Student Resource Center to assist students in their academic work. A [Common Writing Rubric](#) was promulgated to encourage students throughout their academic career to continue improving their written English. The addition of a one-credit course for freshmen ([HUM 101](#)), designed to introduce students to Western education models, including critical/analytical thinking and information literacy, also lessens the challenges to struggling students. This required course has also served as an extended first-semester



advisement for students, helping them make better decisions about courses and setting up a plan for graduation. One staff member has been designated as an Academic Advisement Coordinator and given released-time to coordinate College-wide advisement for greater consistency and for giving students accurate information as well as training other faculty in advisement.

#### **4. The institution uses measures that are suitable to its student population.**

The College recognizes that while meeting all standard measurements, the definitions used in measuring retention do not fit the mission of the College, that these definitions need to be adapted for the mission of DWC. The College uses [other measures](#) that indicate success related to its mission. These ways may include pointing to men who have entered other religious orders or have been ordained as diocesan priests, as well as men and women who have dedicated their lives to other kinds of ministries or helping professions. Recently culled [demographic data](#) shows that 90% of DWC's female student are already in vows to religious orders, so many of these students return to their religious orders after completing their studies at Divine Word College.

## **Sources**

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- 2018 Default Rate
- 2018 Degrees Awarded
- 2018 Enrollment Changes
- 2018 Fulltime Ratio
- 2018 Retention Rates
- 2018 Weak Graduation -Persistence Rates
- 2018-19.DWC Strategic Plan Score Card
- Administration Manual January 2019
- Administration Manual January 2019 (page number 32)
- Catalog080114
- Catalog080114 (page number 44)
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- Catalog080114 (page number 58)
- Course Catalog 2019-2020
- Course Catalog 2019-2020 (page number 74)
- Course Catalog 2019-2020 (page number 75)
- Course Catalog 2019-2020 (page number 86)
- Divine Word College Strategic Plan 2018-2021
- DWC Graduates from 2005 – 2015
- Fall Demographics 2018
- First Year Retention Rate - 2001 to Present (updated January 2016)
- Graduates in Higher Ed
- Graduates revised.xlsx
- Graduation Rate and First Year Persistence Rate 2001 to Present (updated
- Ken' Report on Retention

- Ministries Program 110408[1]
- Predictive Analysis of HLC
- Religious Formation Program 2017.pdf
- StrategicPlan2014-2017Final20140503full
- SVD Candidate Demographis - January 2016
- WritingRubric IDS 2014-15

## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Summary

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Divine Word College has a vested interest in good assessment of its SVD candidates as well as the religious sisters and lay missionary students. SVD candidates are expected to have a sincere interest in becoming Divine Word Missionaries, and the goal of the College Mission Statement and Formation Program (RFP) is to assist them in their discernment for religious life. Thus students who are evaluated to have a religious missionary commitment, good character, and sufficient academic ability for further theological or professional studies are seen as good candidates for the SVD Novitiate and eventually as vowed members of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). Other SVD candidates will often discern that this particular vowed religious life is not for them, or the Formation Team might also make this determination for a particular candidate. This is not seen as a failure but as a success, for students are guided to another better-fit vocational choice while being given a strong foundation in their faith, spiritual life, and academic development. For the religious sisters and lay missionary students, the goal is to help them develop their academic and religious preparation for future ministries in the Church according to the constitutions of their orders or for lay Church ministry in their home countries.

In this specific DWC Mission, the College intends to:

- Continue with its well-developed Religious Formation Program Assessment, which has yielded useful information on improving its program to meet student and institutional goals.
- Continue to share experiences and challenges through the Academic Formation Advisory Council.
- Maintain close interactions through advisement and faculty meetings with individual students and meetings with formators that allows for good formative assessment and communication between academic and formation.
- Continue with regular program reviews as a way of receiving external evaluations and development of its programs.
- Strengthen program and faculty interactions through its newly developed department structure, which will allow for greater integrated assessment of its students and programs.
- Seek out and maintain qualified instructors and formation team members for its programs.
- Allow students greater choice and personal responsibility in choosing electives beyond the Core requirements.
- Continue to track student retention through the office of the Retention Coordinator especially through the exit interview.

- Continue commitment and support for the newly restructured Intensive English Language Institute, which is critical in the matriculation of students into the College academic programs.

DWC looks to continuously improve its assessment program for the purpose of educational and formational development through:

- Application of its new Capstone projects as integrated assessment across programs and development of good critical instruments for evaluating the Capstone outcomes.
- Use of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) to track critical thinking improvement of its students in spite of the language and cultural challenges that are being faced.
- Instituting comprehensive curriculum mapping and thus assessing how the newly developed Core Competency SLOs and Degree Program SLOs are being met with course and instructor evaluations every semester.
- Explore the results of a new external measure of English language skills, the CaMLA, currently used by the Intensive English Language Institute as part of student assessment.
- Using the new structure of the Assessment Committee revitalize and refine a myriad of assessment vehicles.
- Developing a documented process for using assessment data to benefit student learning under the direction of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

## Sources

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- Administration Manual January 2019
- Administration Manual January 2019 (page number 32)
- Administration Manual January 2019 (page number 67)
- Administration Manual January 2019 (page number 68)
- Email - CC Core Curriculum
- Program Review Guidelines
- RFP-A ASSESSMENT Document from KA per meeting 2.28.2008