



Introduction and Background

This chapter provides the background for Webster University's 2008 self-study, including: institutional history, the self-study organization, the process and accreditation history with the Higher Learning Commission, responses to the Concerns of the 1998 Comprehensive Visit, recent Commission requests and actions, and other Webster University licensure and accreditation information. This section also contains federal compliance information.

A. History of Webster University

A spirit of innovation has always characterized Webster University. Founded in 1915, Webster University is one of several schools formed by the Sisters of Loretto, who were geographic and intellectual pioneers. Loretto College was one of the first Catholic Colleges for women west of the Mississippi River; in 1924 the institution changed its name to Webster College. The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (now the Higher Learning Commission) accredited Webster College on March 19, 1925. In 1931, Webster initiated an international student program with nearly 200 faculty and students involved in study abroad between 1931-1950. In 1962, male students were admitted in Fine Arts programs. Webster College became independent and coeducational in 1967 during a period of profound changes in American private education. Leaders from the St. Louis corporate and professional community were invited to join the Board of Trustees. This conversion to a private and secular institution was made with a commitment to retain the values of a liberal arts education even as the institution adapted to rapidly changing times. The College began to grow and soon expanded into new areas of educational delivery, including programs for working adults.

In 1972, the first extended-campus program was opened in Kansas City. Within a few years (1974-1977), Webster University became a significant educational provider for the United States military. The first international campus program was opened in 1978, in Geneva, Switzerland, followed in 1981 with a campus in Vienna, Austria. In 1983, the College became Webster University. The name “Webster University” better identified the scope and range of the University’s academic programs, the growth of its student populations, and its commitment to internationalism. The campus in Leiden, the Netherlands, was opened in 1983, and a campus in London opened in 1986. Webster University currently enrolls approximately 20,000 (11,400 FTE) students throughout its multi-campus network. Webster University has recognized a unique opportunity to address unmet student needs with quality educational programs and simultaneously transform itself into a multicampus and international institution.

Now nearing its centennial, Webster University continues to grow. In 1993, the School of Business and Technology was established. That was quickly followed by the establishment of the College of Fine Arts (1994), the College of Arts and Sciences (1995), the School of Education (1995), and the School of Communications (1996). In 1992, substantial physical campus improvements were realized, including: the opening of a new University Center, acquisition of an additional 12 acres (and 19 properties) on the University’s main campus, and completion of two new classroom buildings at Webster’s campus in Geneva, Switzerland. In 1998, Webster Village Apartments, a new residential life complex, was opened. In 2001, a new parking structure and student support offices were opened (Garden Park Plaza). In 2002, an expansion of the Loretto-Hilton Center for the Performing Arts was completed, and in 2003 our new five-story Emerson Library opened with rave reviews from students throughout our network. A significant Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant (2001-06) supported library infrastructure and provided funding for faculty development.

Dr. Richard S. Meyers, the tenth president of Webster University, executed a vision of expansion, quality, and international perspective. He built a strong Board of Trustees, a senior administrative team, and helped secure the future of this dynamic institution. Enhanced financial stability, expansion of the home campus infrastructure, growth of student enrollments, academic program expansion, the implementation of new planning models, growth of the full-time faculty, new capital projects, revitalization of facilities in extended campus locations, new partnerships formed, improved technology infrastructure, and new quality assurance initiatives, including specialized accreditations of our largest academic programs, are indicators of his leadership. In 1996, Webster University opened an MBA program in China.

Study Abroad programs have grown consistently, and in 2004 the “World Traveler” program was created to fund free round-trip airfare for qualified students to support their study abroad at a Webster international campus. The domestic extended campus network has continued to grow as new military education programs and graduate centers for working adults have opened. Online programs formally began in 2001 with authorization (2002) to offer an online MBA program. While extended military deployments with the war in Iraq have impacted the military education segment of the institution’s enrollment portfolio, the University’s operations and academic outcomes are at an all-time high.

Today, Webster University is a dynamic, independent, multicampus, international university providing quality educational programs to diverse constituents, including adult-learners, young traditional-aged students, corporate and military personnel, and international students.

The following table provides a concise summary of basic institutional data. See the “Institutional Snapshot” in the Self-Study appendix for a summary of the institution’s overall scope and nature of operations. Also, the University publishes an annual *Sum and Substance* report, which provides a comprehensive overview of institutional data and research.

PROFILE OF WEBSTER UNIVERSITY	
FOUNDED	1915
STATUS	Independent, private not-for-profit, comprehensive, nondenominational, multicampus, international university [Carnegie Classification of Masters Universities (1 larger programs)]
LOCATIONS HOME CAMPUS	Metropolitan St. Louis, Mo. (47 acres located in Webster Groves, Mo., in southwest St. Louis County)
MILITARY	Graduate programs offered at 30 U.S. military bases (12 states)
METROPOLITAN	Graduate programs, some undergraduate degree-completion programs, offered in 21 metropolitan locations (9 states)
INTERNATIONAL	Four European metropolitan locations (Geneva, Leiden, London and Vienna); and Asia (Shanghai, China; and Thailand). Partnership programs in Japan and elsewhere.
ENROLLMENT	Opening Fall 2007 headcount: 19,398 Students (11,468 FTE) 3,974 UG (3,238 FTE) 15,424 Grad (8,230 FTE)
FACULTY	171 Full-time faculty (77% hold terminal degrees), 600 part-time professionals (St. Louis), and 900 adjunct practitioners in the U.S. extended campuses.
PROGRAMS	Undergraduate and graduate degrees offered in business and management, education, communications, fine arts, and the arts and sciences
DEGREES	BA, BS, BFA, BM, B.M.Ed, MA, MS, MBA, MAT, MHA, MSN, EdSpec, D.Mgt.
ATHLETICS	NCAA III; St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC)
REVENUES	FY 2006-07: \$180,025,000 (84% tuition dependency)(Compared to \$75 million in FY 1997-98) with 96% tuition dependency.
ENDOWMENT	Approximately \$68,537,000 (May, 2007) (Compared to \$24.7 million in May,1997)
TUITION	\$19,330 Undergraduate, full-time (St. Louis) \$435 Graduate, per credit (St. Louis)
FINANCIAL AID	70% of degree-seeking undergraduate students (and 49% of graduate students) received some form of financial aid. The average need-based award is \$6,284. The average discount rate for FT undergraduates in St. Louis is 36%.

B. Self-Study Process

Webster University approached the Self-Study process with intentional goals. We were committed to engage our entire University community, as well as other constituencies, in an open process that would assist us with continuous improvement while clearly documenting evidence that Webster fulfills the Criteria for Accreditation by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The goals of this self-study process included:

- a.) The HLC Visiting Team and Commission will have sufficient evidence to recommend re-accreditation without stipulations.
- b.) Webster will complete a thorough, honest and open evaluative Self-Study that corrects and interprets data, makes appropriate judgments and/or findings, and leads to recommendations for continuous improvement.
- c.) Webster will include and involve the entire University in order to ensure the effective evaluation of the institution.
- d.) The process will further enhance our commitment to build a culture of evidence and inquiry for the improvement of learning and teaching at Webster.

University Expectations of the Self-Study

Webster University realized that the institutional process used to produce its evaluative study was critical. In order to gain the maximum benefit for the improvement of Webster University, our self-study process had these expectations:

Be planned

Careful organization of the self-study process will assure the University's maximum benefit from its investment of resources and commitment.

Include the whole university

The evaluation of each component of Webster University will be used to formulate the evaluation of the University as a whole.

Be comprehensive

The University's Self-Study Report will reflect the entire institution. This requires wide involvement from faculty, students, administrators, staff, alumni, trustees, and external constituents.

Produce awareness

The self-study process will strive to produce widespread awareness, across the entire University, of this institutional evaluation. Our administrators, faculty, staff, and students will know and understand "how, why and by whom" the self-study was conducted.

Clarify vision

The self-study process will assist our entire institution to clarify and strengthen its collective vision of Webster University and its future.

Permit wide involvement

The entire Webster University community will acknowledge that they had ample opportunity to contribute to the process and to its results.

Build on existing information

Webster University is extensively engaged in academic assessment, regular self-evaluation, planning, external monitoring, and quality improvement. The Self-Study will rely heavily on these existing evaluation programs. Also, the Self-Study will review these existing evaluative approaches and procedures for improvement.

Use technology

The self-study will utilize technology for data collection, communication, networking, and display of evidence.

Evaluate

The self-study process and the report will strive to be analytical, self-perceptive, and self-critical for purposes of self-improvement.

Describe change

The self-study will describe and assess institutional progress since the last self-study of 1998.

Identify strengths and areas of improvement

The self-study will be a candid appraisal of strengths, concerns, opportunities, and challenges.

Produce a formal report

The self-study process will result in a formal Report that explicitly documents that Webster University meets the Commission's requirements and criteria for re-accreditation. The Report will also assist the University in enhancing its effectiveness.

Committee Structure and Membership

The University-wide self-study was conducted through the work of a Steering

Committee and its five subcommittees, each assigned to one of the HLC Criterion and its core components. Additionally, an analytical and research team assisted the committees with their data needs.

The Steering Committee consisted of the Self-Study Coordinator and the chairs of each of the five subcommittees. Total membership on the assigned committees included 53 individuals: faculty, staff, administration, and students. A prominent self-study Web site was maintained throughout the process which included details on the process, committee minutes, all working draft documents, data sources, and chapter drafts for the Report. Community comments were invited throughout the process, and regular reminders were sent to faculty and staff on progress.

The Web site is: <http://www.webster.edu/selfstudy>

In addition, care was taken to inform the public of the university's comprehensive evaluation and forthcoming team visit. [EXHIBIT: HLC0.5 Third Party Comment]

C. Accreditation History (1998-2008)

Following its 1998 Comprehensive Visit for continuing accreditation, Webster University has requested and participated in the following focused visits and/or change requests to the Commission:

2000 Focused Visit to Webster University – Thailand

(Bangkok and Cha-Am, Thailand)

[Action: Enrollment Report Required by December 2002]

2001 Institutional Change Request

(Offer Master of Business Administration [MBA] degree online)

[Action: Approved, 2002]

2005 Institutional Change Request

(Offer undergraduate degree-completion program in South Carolina)

[Action: Approved, 2005]

2006 SAS Reconciliation Project on Distance Education

[Action: Approved, 2005]

Complete reports and documentation related to these visits, requests and/or actions are available. [EXHIBIT: HLC0.6 HLC Approvals and Changes]

A summary of any actions and/or findings from these reports or visits are summarized below.

D. Responses to 1998 Team Visit Concerns

The last comprehensive visit by the Commission to Webster University took place March 22-27, 1998. The result of that visit was a positive team recommendation for continued accreditation, with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled for 2007-08. No progress, monitoring or contingency reports were recommended. A change request to approve a new international campus in Thailand (Bangkok and Cha-am, Thailand) was approved, with the understanding that a visit to this new international site would occur after its opening (1999-2000).

The 1998 team noted many areas of strength, including: a strong “student-centered” commitment; dedicated faculty who integrate theory and practice; high level of trust within the organization; a visionary campus master plan; creative partnerships; strong administrative team; exemplary self-study process; committed and dedicated Board of Trustees; model library information technology system, strong commitment to internationalization; extended campuses committed to “One University.”

The 1998 team observed a number of challenges for the University. Ten challenges were listed in the Team Report (p. 54). As a result of those recommendations and observations, and from other institutional initiatives, several important changes have

been made and implemented. The following is a discrete list of the 1998 Team's identified concerns ("challenges") and the actions the University has taken to remedy or improve the findings. [EXHIBIT: HLC0.7 1998 Team Report]

Challenges 1, 6

"No formal cyclical academic program review process"

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 46, 54]

"An assessment plan which has not been fully implemented"

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 49-50, 54]

Since the 1998 Visit, Webster has created an Academic Assessment Center, with a director, coordinator, and administrative assistant (3FTE). Working with the Schools and Colleges, all academic programs have implemented full assessment processes for purposes of improving student learning outcomes. Significant progress has been made with data collection and analysis. This formalized and systematic work, documenting continuous improvement, represents substantial change and investment by the University. This focus on outcomes assessment and improvement has enabled the University to pursue specialized accreditation in our largest academic programs (business management, and education).

Criterion 3 of this Self-Study Report will focus on this and related core components. [EXHIBIT: HLC3a NCATE, HLC3a ACBSP, Appendix 2 History of Assessment at Webster]

Challenge 2

"Ensuring more consistent quality across programs and extended campuses"

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 49-50, 54]

Since the majority of the University's extended campus offerings are applied graduate programs (master's degree) from the School of Business and Technology, the University, under the leadership of the School's academic dean, has designed and implemented a comprehensive quality assurance program called "The Consistency Project." This initiative provides common learning goals for all programs, has detailed course guides that target common objectives for all courses, controls faculty credentials, establishes approved textbook lists, standardizes syllabi and course components, and, most importantly, systematically collects learning outcome data for continuous improvement. Extensive training and faculty development in implementing the program has occurred. These quality assurance measures, and other systems, have prepared the School of Business and Technology to seek specialized accreditation with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). This candidacy is pending. The ACBSP Team Report (Visit October 14-20, 2007) cited these quality assurance processes as: *"The Consistency Project is a well-deployed, best-in-class, systematic approach to ensuring that programs are delivered worldwide with consistency and quality."*

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a ACBSP, HLC3b.13 The Consistency Project]

Challenge 3

“Poor quality of current science laboratory space”

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 13, 54]

The University has made some modest adjustments in science labs and in instructional classrooms. These include facilities used in biological sciences and in nursing programs. Wireless technology has been provided to institutional spaces, and continuous acquisition of modern science equipment has insured that students learn using contemporary equipment, if in long-used quarters. Under the supervision of relatively new faculty, undergraduate biology students and graduate nurse anesthesia students are conducting impressive research. A new science lab facility has been planned, designed, and capitol fund raising is underway. This new facility will double the number and size of current lab facilities.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.8 Campus Master Plan, HLC0.9 Science Facility Design Plans]

Challenge 4

“Library holdings are limited”

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 19, 24, 54]

While the 1998 Team praised and acknowledged a “model library information technology system,” students expressed disappointment with the 1998 facility (a joint library operated with Eden Seminary). A new library complex (the Emerson Library) was opened in 2003. This five-story, 71,500 square foot, \$21 million dollar facility has quickly become a vital physical and technological link between the St. Louis home campus and our entire extended campus network, which it supports. Acquisitions, including substantial databases supporting specific academic programs, have been made and continue as Webster University places a priority on academic support. The Self-Study finds the Emerson Library, its holdings and its services to be a center of excellence. Emerson Library is discussed extensively under Criterion 3d.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3d Library Report]

Challenge 5

“Inconsistent student support services staffing”

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 23, 24, 54]

The 1998 Team identified strengths in the key offices of Student and Enrollment Management divisions. They commended the “student-centered” commitments they found throughout the student affairs offices, and noted that the enrollment growth at Webster could be causing some “stress in some units of Student Support Services.” The institution has strategically opened new residential life facilities and grown student life programs in order to improve student services and extracurricular programs. The residential life facilities include: the Webster Village Apartments (1998), and two new residence halls (2006) called “East Hall” and “West Hall.”

The new Garden Park Plaza (2001) complex brought essential student services into one convenient location (Academic Advising, Evening and Graduate Student Admissions, Career Center, and a new University Bookstore). A new campus-dining complex (Marletto’s Marketplace) opened in 2004 to serve student and staff dining needs, along with enhanced dining offerings in the new Crossroads at the University Center.

Accompanying these new contemporary facilities, the University has created innovative programs and activities to support student life and services.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.10 Housing Web Site, HLC4a.10 Student Life Programs, HLC5d1 Student Affairs Annual Report]

Challenge 7*“Insufficient institutional data collection and analysis”*[\[TEAM PROJECT, PP 13-14, 54\]](#)

The University has made considerable progress in its capacity to collect and analyze institutional data. Expertise has continued to be developed in Enrollment Management, in Finance, in Academic Affairs, and in Academic Assessment to collect and analyze institutional data related to their operations. Benchmark indicators, with comparative data on similar institutions, are increasingly available. The institution has continued to use both a centralized (Office of Institutional Research, 1 FTE) and a decentralized (all administrative areas having expertise in report writing and analysis) approach in collecting, reporting, and analyzing data. The Self-Study process again revealed continued challenges in this area, and our new Strategic Plan includes specific objectives aimed at further coordination of this important activity.

Challenge 8*“Uncertain fiscal and political resources to accomplish the campus master plan”*[\[TEAM REPORT, PP. 13, 54\]](#)

The University has made remarkable progress on its master plan implementation. While changes have occurred from the early plan, the University has completed important master plan projects such as the following:

- 1999** City of Webster Groves approved the Campus Master Plan
- 2001** Garden Park Plaza
[700 space parking facility, plus core student services relocated to this complex]
- 2002** Renovations and expansion to the Loretto-Hilton Center for Performing Arts
- 2003** Emerson Library completed
- 2006** New residence halls completed
- 2007** Community Music School and Performance Hall opened

Currently underway are plans for a new academic classroom building which will also house the School of Business and Technology, a new science lab facility, renovation of the Fine Arts studio building, and renovation of the Sverdrup complex to accommodate growth in the School of Communications. The strong fiscal position of the University gives us confidence that resources will be available to continue implementing our master plan.

Challenge 9*“Improving, but limited, ethnic diversity in the staff and faculty”*[\[TEAM REPORT, PP. 9, 54\]](#)

The University has continued to make progress in recruiting and retaining more diverse staff and faculty, including both full-time and part-time employee categories. The University is not satisfied with its progress and has included new initiatives aimed at strengthening diversity in the new Strategic Plan.

[\[EXHIBIT: HLC0.11 Human Resources, Appendix 1 Institutional Snapshot, HLC0.23 Draft Strategic Plan\]](#)

Challenge 10

“Need for enhanced institutional advancement efforts, especially building the University’s endowment.”

[TEAM REPORT, PP. 11, 54]

While progress has been made with the expansion of the endowment (1997=\$24.7 million; 2007 =\$68.5 million), the current Development Campaign includes a significant goal for the new campaign. Tuition dependency has been reduced from 97% in 1997 to 83% in 2007. Individual gifts are at record levels, with the recent gift from Ambassador George H. Walker III (\$10 million) setting a new University standard. A major campaign is underway with strong trustee support, and with new leadership in the development office, we have confidence that the future development of the University is bright. This current campaign (Webster Works) has a goal of \$55 million. By January 2007, the Development office reported \$35.3 million achieved. Of this total campaign, \$35 million is devoted to capital construction projects.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.12 Campaign Information]

E. Other HLC Requests and Visits**a.) 2000 Focused Visit to New International Campuses in Thailand**

When the 1998 Team recommended approval for a new Webster University-Thailand Campus, it was understood that a focused visit was required after operations were established. A two-member team visited the campus, November 28-30, 2000, accompanied by the Associate Director of the Commission. The team’s report appropriately identified start-up issues, especially the goal of achieving a viable enrollment to insure the future viability of the campus. The team recommended that a subsequent report on Enrollment be required. This progress report was submitted (December 2002) and reviewed by Commission staff (March 2003).

The Webster-Thailand campus has continued to make progress. As the team anticipated, the rural location of the campus and issues of enrollment stability continue to be hurdles. The campus has become an important Asian anchor for a segment of our international programs. It is a popular study abroad option for students, and special programs and courses in Buddhist Studies are unique. During the Spring 2007, as part of our Study Abroad Affiliates program, 22 students from Millikin University (Decatur, Illinois) spent the semester at Webster – Thailand.

The campus has strong administrative leadership and committed faculty. Graduate MBA programs for working adults have been relocated to Bangkok Center, which was a recommendation from the team. This change had helped to strengthen the University’s overall operations in Thailand. Webster’s continuing efforts to support Webster – Thailand, from the Board, to faculty and students, demonstrate commitment to the University’s mission.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.6 HLC Approvals and Changes]

b.) 2001 Institutional Change Request to Offer MBA Program Online

The University’s online course development activity began largely to support our graduate programs for working adults (including our military education population). In December 2001, the University filed an Institutional Change Request for first-time authorization to offer an online program. The program was the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Increasingly, our students wanted the option of completing their courses either through traditional classroom formats or through distance education delivery (Internet). This was especially important for our military students. The Change Request was approved (February 2002), and the University has continued to demonstrate strong success with its online programs.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.6 HLC Approvals and Changes]

c.) 2005 Institutional Change Request to Offer Undergraduate Degree-Completion Program at Selected Campus Centers in South Carolina

Responding to interest for more undergraduate degree-completion options in South Carolina, Webster University submitted an Institutional Change Request (July, 2005) to add a “2 plus 2” program to several of our existing extended campus centers in South Carolina. The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education had previously encouraged and approved this expansion. With Webster’s strong track record of administering external campus programs, and with the fairly recent visits by the Visiting Team to our South Carolina operations, this requested change was approved by Commission staff. The “2 plus 2” program has now been implemented (2006-07) in Columbia, S.C. and in Charleston, S.C.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.6 HLC Approvals and Changes]

d.) 2006 SAS Reconciliation Project on Distance Education

In December 2005, the Commission provided Webster and other institutions with an opportunity to reconcile its online programs (SAS Reconciliation Project) with formal approval expectations. The University submitted a detailed report (January 2006) with exhibits demonstrating the quality of its distance education programs. The Commission approved the requested authorization, and revised the University’s SAS to allow distance education programs (“No prior Commission approval required”).

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.6 HLC Approvals and Changes]

F. Specialized Accreditations/Approvals

Webster University maintains several specialized or professional accreditations for programs, as listed below. In addition, the University maintains a rich variety of professional memberships and organizations with professional groups, associations, and agencies. A full listing of these accreditations, approvals, licensures, and memberships are contained in the *Undergraduate Studies Catalog* and the *Graduate Studies Catalog* and also published online. [EXHIBIT: <http://www.webster.edu/acadaffairs/accredit.html>]

The Self-Study reviewed the institution’s presentations on accreditations, approvals, licensure and memberships, and recommended that these public presentations be restricted to a limited number of placements (print, online). The Office of Academic Affairs will take responsibility for monitoring all of these descriptions for accuracy, and will maintain a single website for all related University approvals.

Specialized program accreditations and/or approvals include:

Business – Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)

(Initial accreditation review currently underway)

The School of Business & Technology has pursued candidacy with ACBSP, with submission of the ACBSP Self-Study (Fall, 2007), and completion of the Site Visit (October 14 – 20, 2007) to the main campus and selected domestic campuses and international locations. At the present time, the School is completing additional data collection and analysis requested by the ACBSP Board, and expects a successful conclusion to this quality assurance process during Spring – Summer 2008.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a ACBSP]

Education – National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Initial NCATE accreditation was successfully achieved Fall 2007, and covers all programs and locations where Webster offers education programs. This initial accreditation for one of the University’s largest programs followed a strategic decision to focus on quality assurance indicators, including specialized program accreditations.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a NCATE]

Education – Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) of Missouri

The School of Education offers 27 professional education programs that have been approved for Teacher Certification by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), State of Missouri. DESE conducted a comprehensive evaluation visit at Webster University October 28 through November 1, 2006, which resulted in continuing approval of the University's professional education programs. The team reported numerous strengths in the University's teacher education programs and approved all requested actions. The next scheduled NCATE visit is Fall 2011.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a NCATE]

Music – National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)

The Department of Music, Leigh Gerding College of Fine Arts, holds specialized accreditation for its undergraduate (BM, BA, BMed) and graduate (MM) degree programs from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

In June 2004, the NASM Commission on Accreditation voted positively to continue Webster University's accreditation ("in good standing"), and approved the addition of several new masters degree programs. The next scheduled review will be 2009-10.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a NASM]

Nurse Anesthesia – Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA)

The Department of Biological Sciences, College of Arts & Sciences, offers a Master of Science (M.S. degree) program in Nurse Anesthesia. The program began in September 1997, with initial accreditation from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA). The most recent Visit was June 29-30, 2006, which resulted in continued accreditation. The COA found areas of concern with student evaluations, and has required a progress report. Most recently, the COA reported student performance on their Certification Examination pass rate (2006 graduation cohort) was exceptional. COA established a mandatory threshold of 74%, with the "preferred" pass rate of 84% for first-time exam takers. Webster's program for 2006 was 89%, which exceeded both benchmarks.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a COA]

Nursing – National League for Nursing (NLN)

Initial accreditation from NLN was granted in 1990, and continuing reaccreditations have been maintained. The most recent NLN Visit was October 30 - November 1, 2007. The Visiting Team report was very positive and complimentary. Formal action by the NLN Commission is expected Spring 2008.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a NLN]

Paralegal/Legal Studies – American Bar Association (ABA)

The ABA has approved Webster's Paralegal (Legal Assistants) and Legal Studies programs since 1989 for programs offered in St. Louis. The most recent re-approval was held Fall 2007. The Self-Study was submitted Fall, 2007, and the Team Visit was September 11 - 12, 2007. As a result of this team's recommendations, a number of curricular changes were mandated to add more specialized legal offerings to the program(s). These changes are being implemented by the College of Arts and Sciences.

[EXHIBIT: HLC3a ADA]

G. State Licensure Approvals

Webster University has extended-campus programs in 20 states and the District of Columbia, and holds proper authorizations at all locations. Most of these states require licensure, authorization, approval, certification, or other types of authorization or approval. These include:

Extended Campus State Licensures/Reviews

STATE	AUTHORIZATION AGENCY	TYPE OF LEGAL AUTHORIZATION	LAST REVIEW	NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW
Arizona	Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education	Certificate of License	April, 2007	March, 2008
Arkansas	Arkansas State Approving Agency	Letter of Approval	August, 2006	August, 2008
California	Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education	Certificate of Authorization	November, 2006	October, 2011
Colorado	Exempt for Licensure	N/A	NA	NA
District of Columbia	Government of the District of Columbia State Education Office Education Licensure Commission	Letter of Approval	November, 2006	October, 2009
Florida	State of Florida Commission for Independent Education	Annual License	December, 2007	December, 2008

Georgia	Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission	Certificate of Authorization	October, 2007	October, 2008
Illinois	Illinois Board of Higher Education	Program Approval	August, 2005	Indefinite
Kansas	Exempt for Licensure	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kentucky	Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education	Letter of Approval	July, 2004	July, 2009
Maryland	Maryland Higher Education Commission	Letter of Approval	July, 2007	August, 2008
Missouri	Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education	Letter of Approval		
New Mexico	Exempt for Licensure	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Carolina	Exempt for Licensure	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oklahoma	Exempt for Licensure	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Carolina	South Carolina Commission on Higher Education	Certificate of Authorization	February, 2002	January, 2007 (Pending Approval)
Tennessee	Tennessee Higher Education Commission	Certificate of Authorization	July, 2007	June, 2008
Texas	Texas Higher Education Commission	License	August, 2007	May, 2008
Utah	Utah System of Higher Education State Board of Regents	Letter of Approval	June, 2007	June, 2008
Virginia	State Council of Higher Education for Virginia	Certificate of Authorization	August, 2007	August, 2008
Washington	State of Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board	Certificate of Authorization	March, 2007	May, 2009

The state reviews vary widely in their focus and purpose. Some approvals are aimed at “consumer protection” regulations, while others focus on educational quality and learning outcomes. Some of the reviews provide the University with valuable information; others are less productive for this formative purpose.

An example of a state licensure process that includes accountability, quality assurance, and academic performance is the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. Webster offers primarily applied masters degree programs in South Carolina at Charleston (1975-), Myrtle Beach (1976-), Beaufort Naval Hospital/MCAS Beaufort (1979-), Fort Jackson (1983-), Greenville (1993-), and Columbia (2001-). In 2007, the S.C. Commission recommended a reorganization of the academic structure of Webster’s operations. Working with the Commission, new full-time academic positions were created, including statewide coordinators and campus program heads.

[EXHIBIT: HLC0.6 HLC Approvals and Changes, HLC0.14 South Carolina Approvals, HLC0.15 State Licensures and Approvals]

H. Military Installation Voluntary Educational Review (MIVER)

Selected U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps bases participate in an educational program review process called Military Installation Voluntary Educational Review (MIVER). These reviews examine the collegiate educational programs offered on-site at military bases and assist in the improvement of these programs through recommendations to the installation center, the participating institutions, and to the military services. The MIVER process focuses on maintaining and improving the quality of military education, and in general has two purposes: (1) to assess the quality of selected on-base voluntary education programs; and (2) to assist in the improvement of these programs through appropriate recommendations to institutions, installations, and the military services. The actual reviews are conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE), under contract to the U.S. military.

The MIVER Process

The MIVER process assesses the quality of the voluntary education programs by (1) ensuring that voluntary education on the military installation is appropriate and consistent with the standards of postsecondary education; (2) examining the nature of the relationship between the installation and each institution operating on that installation; and (3) assessing the relevance of each institution’s offerings to its own objectives and those of the military installation.

Perhaps the most important part of the preparation process for a MIVER visit is the self-study conducted by the installation and the supporting education institutions. Through these self-study reports, MIVER team reviewers learn about the education program on the installation and formulate specific inquiries used during the visit. The *MIVER Orientation & Guidelines* contains detailed information regarding the preparation of self-study reports which include the following principles of best practice:

Principle 1. Mission

The institution providing voluntary education programs on a military installation has an educational mission statement that reflects sound adult education philosophy and goals and is clearly compatible with the installation Voluntary Education Program mission statement and objectives.

Principle 2. Education Program: Instruction, Faculty, Assessment

Education programs and services provided on military installations maintain the high quality required by regionally accredited institutions, using qualified and dedicated faculty supported by professional development programs and appropriate infrastructure. Assessment of student learning is based on the achievement of comprehensive and specific learning outcomes.

Principle 3. Program Administration: Management, Student Services

Administration of the program includes academic and student services and

demonstrates effective and reliable management of human, fiscal, technological, and learning resources.

Principle 4. Resources: Instructional, Physical, Financial

There is a sufficient reservoir of relevant instructional resources available to the instructor for teaching support and to the student for reference, research, and independent learning. Facilities and equipment are appropriate to support the programs and services offered. Financial resources are adequate and appropriately used to accomplish the institutional mission and to achieve program goals and objectives.

Principle 5. Program Evaluation

Continuous and systematic program evaluation stimulates program improvement, enhances quality and increases the likelihood of the achievement of program mission and objectives.

MIVER VISITS SINCE 1998	
LOCATION	DATE
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC	May 18-20, 1997
Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, AZ	March 8-10, 1998
Fort Bragg, NC	July 12-14, 1998
Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL Mayport Naval Station, FL	November 14-18, 1999
Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, SC Marine Corps Recruiting Depot Parris Island, SC	August 13-17, 2000
Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, AZ	September 17-20, 2000
No MIVER Visits	2001
Fort Bliss, TX	June 2-5, 2002
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC	August 11-12, 2002
Fort Leavenworth, KS	August 19-September 1, 2004
Fort Leonard Wood, MO	April 10-13, 2005
Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, SC Marine Corps Recruiting Depot Parris Island, SC	May 17-20, 2005
Scott Air Force Base, IL	June 5-8, 2005
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Washington, DC	March 19-21, 2006
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, NC	August 6-9, 2006
Peterson AFB, CO	June 17-20, 2007

The University's most recent MIVER Visits resulted in positive reviews, with the Visiting Teams citing both University strengths and recommendations.

As part of the MIVER evaluation, the University documents steps it has taken to resolve or address any concerns previously identified in an earlier MIVER review. The University has found the MIVER process helpful as a formative process, as well as providing an opportunity to demonstrate quality assurance at a particular installation. The HLC Self-Study found that the University's continuing participation in MIVER reviews was positive and valuable.

[EXHIBIT: [HLC0.16 MIVER Web Site](#), [HLC0.17 Summary of MIVER Reviews](#), [HLC0.18 MIVER Self-Studies and Documents](#)]

I. Federal Compliance

The following section, with its accompanying exhibits, document Webster University's compliance with the following Commission policies regarding Federal Compliance:

- Credits, program length and tuition.
- Institutional compliance, Title IV
- Visits to off-campus locations
- Advertising and recruitment materials
- Institutional records of student complaints
- Third-party comment

a.) Credits, Program Length, and Tuition

Webster University utilizes semester credit hours to document student learning experiences in both undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Official transcripts (enrollment history) follow common practices used in higher education (i.e. course title, level, credit hours, grade, term/date, location). Courses are assigned credits using University policies, which define minimum contact hours per semester credit award. Courses are scheduled throughout the University in traditional semester length formats (16 week semester), as well as in accelerated 8-9 week schedule formats. The latter format is used in our adult and evening program schedules. The University's academic calendar, scheduling formats, grading policies, credit hour descriptions, degree requirements, program length, transfer policies, etc., follow best practices and guidelines endorsed by professional organizations such as AACRAO, NAFSA, etc. These academic policies and formats are all published in the University's academic catalogs (available online). [EXHIBIT: HLC0.1 Undergraduate Catalog, HLC0.2 Graduate Catalog, HLC0.1a and HLC0.2a Online Catalogs]

As part of the self-study, the committee found compliance throughout all University programs with credit hour awards, program length, and tuition.

Tuition rates are established annually, and are based on program level (undergraduate, graduate), location, and other factors. For example, military students at military installations are charged tuition rates established through annual negotiations with our military contract agencies. A few specialized academic programs have slightly differential tuition rates due to their more expensive instructional costs (doctoral program, M.S. in Nurse Anesthesia, B.F.A. in theatre conservatory.) Programs at our international campuses have tuition fees charged in the local currency, and reflect institutional costs and local market conditions. The self-study committee found these differential tuition rates to be justified. [EXHIBIT: HLC0.19 Tuition Schedules]

Program length (total number of credit hours required for each degree program) for Webster programs is similar to other programs at other accredited institutions:

- Bachelors programs - 128 credits
- Masters programs - 36 credits

Specialized programs also have comparable program length requirements with other institutions, and with their specialized accreditation or certification requirements (if any).

b.) Compliance with Higher Education Reauthorization Act (Title IV)

Administration of federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs is a complex task that involves the cooperation of various entities across the university. Annual, independent audits required by federal regulation seldom produce significant issues or concerns with the institution's compliance with applicable laws, regulations and rules.

On the rare occasion that a significant finding is made, the university acts decisively to address and correct any deficiency in its processes. Consequently, the university has not been subjected to any limitation, suspension, or termination actions by the U.S. Department of Education or any other applicable authority.

Default Rate

Webster University's official cohort default rate, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Education for the last three years, has been below 2%.

FY 2002 : 1.4%

FY 2003 : 1.2%

FY 2004 : 1.0%

These rates are well below the levels that would trigger any limitation, suspension, or termination proceedings. Indeed these default rates are low enough that the university is exempt from various federal regulations (delayed disbursements for first-time borrowers, multiple disbursements for single term loans, etc.).

School as Lender

Because the university's cohort default rate is below 10%, we are eligible to operate as a lender under the Federal Family Educational Loan Programs (FFELP) and have chosen to do so. Per federal regulation, the revenue generated under the School as Lender program are used to cover administrative costs, reduce loan fees otherwise charged to students, and to fund need based grants.

Lender Relations

In recent months there has been a variety of investigations by states' Attorneys General, U.S. Senators, and other governing authorities into potential problems in the relationships between student loan providers and school personnel. To date, Webster University has been asked to provide information to a variety of these constituencies and has complied without any resultant call for corrective action.

In summary the university believes itself to be currently in compliance with the diverse requirements and regulations surrounding its administration of student aid programs. Given the complexity of aid programs and the unique nature of its multi-campus operation, isolated incidences of non-compliance may occasionally arise but are normally minor in nature. The university is vigilant in looking for potential compliance problems and proactive in addressing them when they arise so that students and their families can rely upon student aid to assist them in fulfilling their educational goals. [\[EXHIBIT: HLC0.20 Title IV Compliance\]](#)

c.) Federal Compliance Visits to Off-Campus Locations

Webster University has assisted the Commission with various site visits. Throughout the 1980's and 90's, numerous site visits by the Commission were made. In recognition of its expertise in managing extended campus locations and programs, the current "Statement of Affiliation Status" permitted the University to open new sites without seeking prior Commission approval. This authority was reflective of the strong, documented, and tested multi-site management skills of Webster University. [\[EXHIBIT: HLC0.21 Federal Compliance Visit Reports\]](#)

As part of new U.S. Department of Education rules, we understand that the Commission will need to amend its policies regarding "blanket approval" to open new sites, and Webster University will fully cooperate with any new procedures, guidelines or policies implement by the Commission.

d.) Advertising and Recruitment Materials

A comprehensive listing of advertising and recruitment materials in which the University's affiliation with the Commission is mentioned is available. The University only makes reference to its affiliation with the Commission in printed materials and does not do so in other advertising and recruitment venues (billboards, radio

advertisements, etc.). In each instance the Commission's web address and local telephone number is listed. A recommendation of the self-study process was to further limit the references to the Commission, and to maintain a single website where accurate and complete information could be maintained for all of the University's accreditations approvals, licensures, and memberships. This recommendation has been implemented. This website includes the use of the Commission's mark, with its hyperlink to the Commission's information on Webster University. [EXHIBIT: <http://www.webster.edu/acadaffairs/accredit.html>, HLC0.22 List of Advertising and Recruitment Materials]

e.) Organizational Records of Student Complaints

Webster University prides itself on student-centered practices and high levels of service. When complaints are received, administrative offices are expected to respond efficiently and professionally, and to assist students with the resolution of the problem.

The self-study identified three administrative offices where formal and serious complaints are received: Executive Office (President's Office), Dean of Student's Office, and Office of Academic Affairs. These offices maintain records of formal and serious student complaints and their resolution (nontrivial complaints, made formally in writing, signed by the student, and addressed to the proper administrative office). Methods utilized to organize these complaints vary by office, and include a log (Student Affairs and President's Office), and a case filing system (Academic Affairs). Other administrative and academic offices manage non-serious student complaints in efficient and satisfactory ways.

f.) Third Party Comment

The Self-Study Committee gave careful attention to disseminating information about the self-study and the HLC Visit to its constituencies. Announcements, following the Commission's models, were posted at every campus of the University. Additionally, a public notice was placed on the university's website, and several advertisements were purchased to place the notice in local newspapers. These notices have been posted since December 2007. [EXHIBIT: HLC0.5 Third Party Comment]