

Dharma Realm Buddhist University

Master of Arts in Buddhist Classics

Program Review

October 3, 2017

External Review Team Members

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Dates of Visit

August 23-24, 2017

Purpose of Visit

Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) is a candidate for accreditation by Western Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). Based on the report of the Site Visit Team, DRBU was asked to have a Program Review completed on one of their degree offerings (the MA Program in Buddhist Classics) to provide evidence to support a positive assessment on Standards 4.3 and 4.4 before the Second Site Accreditation Visit scheduled for Fall 2017.

When DRBU invited us to visit, we understood that this invitation was motivated by a desire for a perspective from colleges with Great Books programs. Dr. Tsukahara (Integral Program at Saint Mary's College of California) and Dr. Wolfe (St. John's College) are members of the teaching faculty at such Great Books colleges. Our extensive experience teaching in these programs (as well as Dr. Tsukahara's experience as Director of the Integral Program) informs our observations and gives us a distinctive angle from which to look at DRBU's MA program.

Executive Summary

Franklyn Wu, Accreditation Liaison Officer, organized a schedule of meetings that helped us get the human context for the very well prepared Self-Study on this Program. Extensive conversations were held with almost everyone involved at DRBU as leadership, faculty, staff, alumni of the Master of Arts program, current graduate students and newly admitted graduate students. *Based on our impressions from these meetings and the very thorough Self-Study Report, we concluded that a well-designed curriculum has been developed, is thoughtfully executed, and meets*

student expectations for their choice of graduate studies. Current enrollment goals are feasible within existing institutional resources. However, the potential for enrollment growth in both the undergraduate and this program that would result from WSCUC accreditation will require tactical institutional commitment to faculty staffing and development. This planning could influence a closer articulation of the undergraduate curriculum with the MA curriculum.

Materials Reviewed

Prior to visiting DRBU, we were provided with a copy of DRBU's July 2017 Program Review Self-Study Report, as well as all supplementary documents. We reviewed these documents both prior to and after our visit to DRBU.

Our visit included the following events:

1. Meetings with the Teaching Faculty and the Program Review Committee. These meetings included discussions of the program's curriculum and pedagogical approaches.
2. Meeting with recent alumni from the Master of Arts in Buddhist Classics program. This meeting included a discussion of alumni's experience and understanding of "spiritual or contemplative exercises" and "ethical sensibility."
3. Visiting a second-year MA class (Shastra Texts BUCL 612, taught by Franklyn Wu and Jessica Samuels). This gave us an opportunity to observe DRBU's pedagogical approach in action.
4. Lunch with current MA students. This meeting included both second-year students and students who had just arrived for their first week in the MA program. This gave us a sense of both experienced and new students' motivations, expectations, and desires from the program.
5. Meeting with the Admissions Team and Committee. This meeting included a discussion of visits by prospective students as well as a discussion of the background expected from incoming students.
6. Meeting to discuss the Program Review, the Academic Resource Center, and the Co-curricular Program and Activities. This meeting included a discussion of the writing process and expectations for MA students; a discussion of the criteria and decision-making process regarding co-curricular events; and assessment of learning outcomes regarding spiritual exercises and ethical sensibility.
7. Meeting with the Office of Academic Affairs. This meeting included a discussion of faculty development.

Perceived Strengths

Here we will comment on the MA program's strengths, based on our reading of the Self-Study Report and our impressions during our visit. We find ourselves in agreement with the Self-Study Report's assessment that "much of what it revealed this time was positive, affirming, and encouraging." In addition, our impression is that the MA program has served its students "as it was designed to."

We will address our comments under two categories. First we will respond to the perceived strengths laid out under four criteria in Section Six ("Summary Reflections") in the Self-Study Report. Second, we will register our observations from the specific perspective of visitors from Great Books institutions.

The Self-Study Report's Reflections on the Four Criteria

1. Mission alignment

We agree with the Self-Study Report's finding that the pedagogy and integral parts of the MA program are strongly aligned with DRBU's mission. Moreover, we have seen at all levels of DRBU a clear, consistent understanding of the MA program's educational strategy and its philosophical/spiritual tradition. This was evident from our meetings with the teaching faculty, administrators, current students, and alumni.

2. Effective student learning

We find that there is a healthy, student-centered learning environment in DRBU's MA program and that genuine collaborative learning results from it. We agree with the Self-Study Report's finding that the program has achieved a satisfactory level of effectiveness in student learning. We also appreciate DRBU's plans and efforts, as articulated in the Self-Study Report, to address concerns about the assessment framework.

3. Teaching faculty quality and development

We recognize, as the WSCUC SAV 1 Visiting Team has previously recognized, the quality and dedication of DRBU's teaching faculty. We affirm that (as the Self-Study Report observes) this "is an important strength for DRBU and its programs." Moreover, we endorse the plans articulated in the Self-Study Report to address concerns about maintaining the quality of DRBU's teaching faculty.

4. Sustainable practices

We support the WSCUC SAV1 Visiting Team Report's emphasis on the importance of a healthy growth in the quantity and diversity of enrollment. We commend DRBU on the plans laid out in the Self-Study Report to address areas of concern in sustainable practices.

A "Great Books" Perspective on DRBU's MA Program

Having considered and seconded commendations by previous external reviewers as well as supporting positive assessments in the Self-Study Report, we focus now on observations of the MA program's curriculum and pedagogy through the lens of our experience with other Great Books programs. The Self-Study Report notes that "DRBU's MA program has not been reviewed by members of the teaching faculty or administrators from other 'Great Books' colleges or programs, with which DRBU shares the most features." We offer this review then to fill in a previously unrepresented Great Books perspective.

Much of what we write in this section of our report will be formulated in terms of comparing and contrasting DRBU's MA program with programs at St. John's College and Saint Mary's College. That is, we will note the ways DRBU follows familiar precedents (i.e., tried and true practices with which we have experience) as well as highlighting the intriguing innovations introduced by DRBU to the Great Books tradition.

The Self-Study Report indicates the extent to which DRBU has looked to and learned from established Great Books colleges: "A wide range of issues was discussed: instruction, students, operation and administration, and institutional governance. Interactions with and assistance from these colleges continued after the visits in the form of email exchanges and phone conversations on specific questions from DRBU. The university plans on maintaining these important relationships."

The strong resemblance between DRBU and other Great Books institutions is evident on many levels. For example, decision-making at DRBU appears to result from a very collaborative process to work towards consensus, and the design of the process for revising the curriculum is not unlike that at St. John's and the Integral Program at Saint Mary's. Moreover, DRBU's discussion-driven pedagogy and reliance on primary texts are emblematic of those at older, well-tested Great Books programs. The Self-Study Report's description of "Teaching at DRBU" closely matches the way we define the role of the teaching faculty at our home institutions. A key point of comparison is DRBU's understanding of professors as guides (rather than experts) who teach outside their fields of academic training. Similarly familiar are the objectives of this pedagogical approach: students are encouraged to acquire certain habits of questioning and learning rather than simply acquiring a predigested body of knowledge. Just as this educational model has proven successful at our institutions, this model seems to be working well at DRBU. The

success of the DRBU's MA program has been indicated, for example, by positive student conference reports and exit interviews of MA students.

The WSCUC SAV 1 Visiting Team has aptly noted: "DRBU has much to offer higher education as in its core educational programs, it is demonstrating how a university can advance its mission and serve its communities on campus and well beyond. It offers a model of education that adds to the rich diversity of US higher education." In addition, the Self-Study Report proposes that, "as one of less than a handful of 'Great Books' style MA programs in the U.S., the MA in Buddhist Classics adds to the diversity of programs devoted to the study of Buddhism." We would underscore the fact that DRBU is enriching diversity not only by bringing a Great Books perspective to Buddhist education, but also by bringing a Buddhist perspective to Great Books education. We were impressed with DRBU's mission's statement, in which the understanding that liberal education "makes one free" is juxtaposed with the recognition of "an intrinsic wisdom possessed by all individuals." While this former understanding reflects a sense of liberal education upheld at other Great Books institutions, the latter recognition seems to reflect a Buddhist heritage that expands and redefines the Great Books tradition and promises to develop it in new directions. The dual heritage implicit in this mission statement is well aligned with the curriculum of the MA program, where topics and texts traditionally discussed in other Great Books programs (such as the topic of desire in Plato's Symposium and the works of Freud) are provocatively set in dialogue with teachings from the Buddhist tradition.

Thus, as DRBU has learned from its predecessors, we have begun to learn from DRBU in return, and there is much we can continue learning from this Buddhist approach. While we recognize that DRBU exhibits fidelity to the Great Books tradition, we have been fascinated to see the distinctive ways DRBU has revised this inherited model. DRBU's revisions bring new blood and vitality to this tradition, giving us opportunities to review and rethink our practices from a fresh perspective. We believe ongoing conversations among these like-minded institutions will continue to be of mutual benefit.

In some respects, the ways DRBU's MA program diverges from its predecessors are comparatively small but illuminating. To take one example, we learned that DRBU devotes an entire semester to reading The Lotus Sutra (a text that is read in only two class sessions in the Eastern Classics MA program at St. John's). DRBU's slow and deliberate approach to such a rich text gives us pause to reflect on the pace with which we read and discuss texts.

Our appreciation of this careful approach was deepened by our experience observing a session of a graduate class on Shastra Texts (taught by Franklyn Wu and Jessica Samuels). In this class, the two professors and a small group of students discussed *Demonstration of Consciousness Only* by the seventh-century Buddhist monk, Xuanzhang. Given the format of this class and the philosophical nature of the text, we might have expected to see the rather free-form discussion typical of

Seminars at St. John's and Saint Mary's. Rather, we witnessed a more focused and directed conversation, typical of the Language or Math Tutorials at our institutions. While this marriage of Seminar-style subject matter to a Tutorial-style pedagogical style differs from our practices, we found this to be effective and instructive. Moreover, we found this illustration of DRBU's co-teaching arrangement to be successful. Both professors were sensitive, receptive, and supportive towards one another and their students, and the group's collaboration was fruitful. While co-teaching at DRBU (with, for instance, its distinction between the senior and junior professor) is somewhat different from the arrangement and intentions of two-tutor Seminars at St. John's, it clearly displays a faithful extension of the familiar Great Books pedagogical model.

Another commendable variation on the model can be seen in the two strands on hermeneutics in DRBU's MA program. The Self-Study Report observes that "the question of interpretation and meaning, which is central to both programs at DRBU, comes to the fore in the MA program." We have not foregrounded hermeneutics in this fashion at our home institutions, and we are particularly interested in what we might learn from the Comparative strand.

A bolder modification of the inherited model is the inclusion of contemplative "spiritual exercises" in the MA program. These exercises (to be distinguished from extracurricular opportunities to engage in Buddhist meditation and chanting) are integrated with the curriculum and complement Great Books-style reading and discussion of primary texts. The Self-Study Report rightly claims that this integration "offers students a unique learning experience." This broadens our sense of what a Great Books program can be, and we will give special attention to this innovation.

The faculty, alumni, and current students we met with fondly and enthusiastically explained the role spiritual exercises play in a DRBU education. Moreover, they introduced us to *Philosophy As a Way of Life* by Pierre Hadot. One faculty member described this book as a "primary text" for DRBU, and it seems to be a key inspiration behind these spiritual exercises. While the Self-Study Report states that these exercises "contribute to the learning of Buddhist texts," conversations during our visit gave us the impression that such exercises are not confined to Buddhist practices and texts. Following the lead of Hadot, who speaks of the models provided by Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, DRBU is developing spiritual practices to complement readings of both Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts. Some DRBU professors spoke of spiritual exercises to round out their students' readings of Confucius and Descartes, and the precedent of St. Ignatius came up in our discussions as well. These activities might appeal to both Buddhists and non-Buddhists, and we find this approach promising and exciting.

Viewing this from the standpoint of the broader community of Great Books programs, we might regard DRBU as standing between the extremes of a secular college like St. John's College (where practical exercises tend to be limited to the

Laboratory and Music classes) and a Catholic college like Thomas Aquinas College (where participation in Catholic liturgy is a strong and central element of college life). Thus DRBU bridges the difference between these extremes and highlights previously underexplored potential implicit in the shared project of Great Books programs. Moreover, DRBU's spiritual exercises might teach us to expand our notion of what it means to take texts seriously. Not merely complementing the activity of sitting at a table and discussing texts, these exercises might be understood as a fuller actualization of the practice of reading Great Books.

We recognize that DRBU is still in the early and experimental stages of sharpening the specifics of spiritual exercises. The Self-Study Report indicates that the "teaching faculty faces several challenges in developing and implementing the spiritual exercise component," and that the faculty will continue giving attention to improving assessment of these exercises, the proportion of time given to them, and teaching faculty training. We will make some recommendations for improvement below. In the present section of our report, we are simply highlighting our enthusiasm for this component of the program and noting that we look forward to seeing how this component evolves.

Areas for Improvement

Section Six: Summary Reflections of The Program Review Self Study Report has thoroughly summarized the specific areas for concern addressed by WSCUC in the accreditation review process and DRBU plans to address them. There were ten areas identified to prioritize over the next five years. During our visit we focused the majority of our attention on progress made on these plans. In the narrative to follow we will follow the Areas of Concern and Initial Plan for Improvement in the tables presented on pp. 51-56 of the Self Study. Our recommendations to augment activities already underway are offered in each section.

Area: Rubrics

DRBU has paid careful attention to rubrics to assess their four program learning outcomes. We were impressed that all faculty were engaged in the work of making these rubrics clearer to reduce ambiguity and subjective application of them. Work has not been completed for revisions of rubrics for PLO 1 and PLO 4.

PLO 1 presents both challenges and opportunities for the DRBU faculty. We support their instinct to "define ethics" as it is to be understood in the rubric. Our sense is that "ethical sensibilities" will grow as the MA students deepen their knowledge of the Buddhist classic texts. But is this "sensibility" any different than the result from close reading of Plato and Aristotle? Is the wisdom that we strive for different? Perhaps the answer to these questions begins with a clarification of "ethical awareness" that is the goal of the BA in Liberal Arts. The current rubric implies that the rubric for the BA would have a score of five for what represents a score of one for the MA.

It may be useful to think of “ethical awareness” as an intellectual path to decision-making. This exercise would identify whether reading Buddhist classics would open up options that a reading limited to Kant or Bentham might constrain. We believe that DRBU’s mission is to advance awareness of the “enlightened” option to decision-making in society. With this view, “ethical sensibility” can be viewed as the actions taken (i.e., the decisions made).

The current rubric for PLO 1 clearly differentiates growth possibilities for students as they move through the MA curriculum. The problem raised by readers about lack of evidence is very important to resolve because it raises not only questions about assessment of student performance but also possible changes to the curriculum that would provide a clearer path to this mission sensitive goal. The following recommendations are offered with the goal of producing more highly scored outcomes for “ethical sensibilities.”

Recommendation: Add Ethics Boot Camp for MA Students

Because some of the future MA students will be graduates of the BA program and, with successful accreditation, many of the international students that would be attracted to it will be from sister institutions, there would be value in beginning graduate study with a common vocabulary and a shared understanding of major ethical theories. The curriculum should reflect the level of “ethical awareness” implied by a one score on the current rubric that reflects the minimum expectations for the BA. This ethics boot camp for entering students could be established within the structure of Orientation activities currently calendared.

Recommendation: Clarify Scope of Student Conferences

Currently DRBU uses what we call “don rags” for each of the first three semesters of the MA program. It was not clear if these conversations were guided by the use of the rubrics prepared for the PLOs. If not, then we recommend that students be given copies of the committee assessments so they can measure their progress towards these goals. The use of rubrics in this setting would help both faculty and students calibrate the evidence reviewed especially on PLO 1.

Recommendation: Revisit Purpose of Fourth Semester Strand Essay

We are very supportive of the strand essay process in use to gather tangible evidence of student work and the associate skill development potential for written expression. However, since much of the evidence of learning that occurs in the peer-based discussion-centered pedagogy is only captured in individual conferences, we suggest that fourth semester strand essay requirement be modified to include a seminar discussion of it. The author would serve as the facilitator. This seminar could also be used to expand PLO 4 to add an oral element of evidence to it.

Recommendation: Consider a Capstone Graduation Exercise

We recommend that the DRBU faculty consider the addition of an integrative essay/seminar to serve as the capstone of the MA degree. This essay suggestion is an expansion of the previous recommendation to combine a written product with a seminar on it. The objective would be to reinforce the integrative intent of the curriculum but with specific focus on the Buddhist foundation to it. This suggestion would provide supporting evidence for both PLO 1 and PLO 4.

Recommendation: Develop Plan to Coordinate Co-Curricular Events

The current intent of the co-curricular programming appears to be to enrich the student experience. Attendance is optional and survey results report high satisfaction. Programming could become more tactical to focus on events to reinforce PLO 1 in particular. Then if attendance at these events is positively correlated with increased scores on “ethical sensibility,” there would be evidence to directly incorporate them into the curriculum, much like the spiritual exercises discussed below.

Area: *Writing*

DRBU faculty is very aware of the significant variation in student performance as evidence for PLO 4. Some of the variation is due to the attention paid to student writing in their earlier education and some may be due to the demands of the curriculum. If the student is not comfortable with the subject, the writing of an essay based on it, even with thoughtful prompts, is a challenge. We also suspect that some of the variation may be due to the fact that English is not the native language of the student.

We support the DRBU faculty’s effort to improve written expression from their students and offer these suggestions as a way to augment their efforts.

Recommendation: Consider Use of a Development-Based Writing Rubric

DRBU uses a rubric strategy to evaluate student writing that is common to courses without regard to years of student exposure to DRBU writing expectations. We suggest that rubrics for each of the two MA years would be useful not only to set expectations for student writing at each level, but also to establish a culture of seeking improvement no matter where they are currently with this skill.

Recommendation: Formalize a Writing Process for Essays

We commend the DRBU faculty on their efforts to make prompts for strand essays clearer to guide the writing process. We also recognize that some faculty are involved with students while the essays are being completed by discussing work in

progress. We suggest that the faculty discuss how to develop a consistent approach to the essays via a process that begins with faculty and student agreement about topic to be pursued, followed by a review of a draft by the faculty member before a final version is produced by the student. In some cases, we recognize that a second-draft or third-draft review may be necessary for students who enter the MA program with writing challenges. It may be useful to construct a rubric for this draft/redraft system to provide tangible guide to the student of areas of attention needed (e.g., organization, text-based evidence, grammar, style, etc.).

Recommendation: Consider Ways to Showcase Good Student Writing

We suggest that the DRBU faculty consider digital publication of the best essays produced each semester or year. This public recognition of good writing would give students models to emulate and encourage efforts to grow as writers. Another idea would be an MA lecture series where graduate students would present their essays to an audience of their peers, undergraduates, other members of the DRBU community, and even the general public.

Area: *Spiritual Exercises*

This is another example of the careful attention DRBU faculty has given to information collected to assess student learning. We encourage the faculty to give high priority to their work to develop necessary faculty development activities and to review the intellectually needed integration of these exercises into the existing curriculum. The students we met were uniform in their desire to deepen their knowledge of Buddhism. The spiritual exercises are integral to their learning.

Recommendation: Produce Reflection Essay Process

We believe that having the students write short reflection essays after each spiritual exercise can provide the faculty with data to revise both the exercises and the time devoted to them to fine-tune the curriculum.

Recommendation: Produce Spiritual Exercise Guidebook

We suggest that the efforts of the faculty to produce materials and activities to foster the spiritual exercises be captured in a volume to be used for faculty training and development. While the sense we have of the current DRBU faculty is that they do not require training, it is quite possible that newly recruited faculty will not fully appreciate the important and integral role these exercises play in the curriculum.

Area: *Institutional Research*

DRBU collects, analyzes, and utilizes data that is impressive for such a young institution. This effort is strategic for their future growth.

Recommendation: Investigate Collection of Video Data

Digital technology has advanced to a point that capture of video record of events such as guest speakers and performances is almost routine at some universities. We believe that videos produced of selective classes could provide formative evidence for student and faculty development as well as information to modify curriculum.

Area: Faculty Training

WSCUC is concerned that the current DRBU model of faculty training via a co-teaching model is not sustainable in the long run. In response, the formation of a committee to investigate options for training at peer institutions has been proposed. Presently, DRBU has the luxury of being over staffed with faculty talent and this is likely to persist even in the first few years after accreditation has been received. Thus, this is the time to train faculty for future roles in the curriculum and to plan for new faculty resources needed to sustain the curriculum (e.g., Sanskrit).

Recommendation: Formalize a Five-Year Faculty Plan

DRBU faculty teach across both programs. A staffing plan will require coordination of enrollment goals for both the MA and BA programs to match up current faculty resources (supply) with course to be taught (demand). The current scheduling of all courses is tactical to share both facilities and faculty resources. We assume that enrollment planning will be the major constraint for this plan to address. We will make a recommendation about MA enrollment goals under the Enrollment area below.

Many DRBU faculty also have administrative duties. We believe that it is important to the culture of DRBU that this model continue. However, with planned growth administrative needs will increase and will reduce the supply of faculty resources. This information will provide the basis for identifying new faculty hiring activities and the faculty training that may be necessary for long-term curriculum support.

We recommend that current co-teaching assignments be maintained in any planned rotation of faculty in the curriculum. Thus, the faculty in training should be first in line to staff the course when it is offered the next year. The next question to answer is how long the tenure should be with a class. We suggest that either a three-year or four-year model be established. Anything longer will be a threat to a student-centered discussion pedagogy.

To summarize what we suggest be addressed in this five-year plan: (1) identify faculty recruitment needs to maintain appropriate coverage of curriculum consistent with planned enrollment goals for both undergraduate and graduate programs; (2) identify faculty rotation necessary to achieve breadth of experience

with total curriculum; (3) identify co-teaching assignments needed to prepare faculty for new teaching responsibilities.

Area: Faculty Decision-Making and Workload

Our visit confirmed the high time cost of the collaborative decision-making model in place at DRBU. There was considerable overlap in the representation at meetings that were arranged for us to get a complete view of the MA program. The governance model in place is appropriate for larger organizations where checks and balances are required to insure reasonable agreement with decisions. However, the membership of these committees is too large. We left our visit with a strong sense of trust and shared mission resident not only in the MA program but also in the university as a whole. Thus, there is an opportunity to reduce committee size and the workload for faculty.

Recommendation: Discuss the Principle of Subsidiarity to guide Faculty Governance

The Principle of Subsidiarity in Catholic Social Teaching is a useful model for decision making in organizations where mission is clear to all participants. This model encourages decentralization of decisions to the parties responsible for implementing the actions required. For example, a decision made by a faculty committee should not be subject to administrative veto unless there is a serious error of judgment made with respect to mission.

Area: Faculty Scholarship

WSCUC encouraged more public evidence of DRBU faculty scholarship via publications and presentations in academic venues. They singled out the opportunity to inform the academic world of the special focus of DRBU's curriculum and pedagogy. They also stressed that scholarship should be a more important part of the faculty performance assessment. These concerns have received priority attention by the DRBU faculty by the production of a Faculty Governance Manual and setting up budget to support faculty development activities.

We offer the following suggestions to help raise the profile of DRBU faculty scholarship.

Recommendation: Encourage Faculty Participation at ACTC

ACTC, Association for Core Texts and Courses, is the ideal venue for DRBU faculty to introduce a Buddhist Classics approach to liberal arts education. The focus of ACTC is the scholarship of teaching. Our institutions, St. John's and Saint Mary's, are long-standing participants at ACTC and we share similar goals to DRBU with respect to the primacy of teaching in our academic lives.

Recommendation: Study Interest in a Collaborate Faculty Development Workshop

DRBU has developed relationships with peer institutions during the preparation process for WSCUC accreditation. We suggest that DRBU determine if there is sufficient interest to organize a two or three-day workshop on Buddhist Classics that could rotate among institutions such as St. John's Santa Fe, North Central's Shimer Division, Saint Mary's, and Thomas Aquinas. These workshops could produce opportunities for joint research projects resulting in conference presentations and publications.

Area: *Enrollments*

DRBU recognizes that growing enrollment is vital for its future and has invested resources in advance of a favorable accreditation decision to increase visibility with prospective students for both the BA and MA programs. DRBU will have to manage its growth in order to protect mission focus curriculum and pedagogy. Maintaining viable cohort sizes will be very important strategy.

Recommendation: Restrict MA Cohort Size to Twelve

Our visit with a second year Buddhist Classics course prompts this recommendation. The student-centered learning environment requires ample opportunity for voices to interact during a class session. If demand is sufficient to require opening up of a second cohort, then care should be taken to insure that cohorts don't become too small. We suggest a minimum cohort size of eight. Pragmatically, if the cohort size becomes too small, then the co-teaching model becomes an economic drag on the total Program.

Recommendation: Develop an Upside Case in the Five-Year Faculty Plan

During our visit we were told of serious interest in the MA program from international students after accreditation decision would permit enrollment. We have no reason to believe from the positive progress made by DRBU in the WSCUC process that accreditation would be denied. Thus, a case for two MA cohorts entering should be developed in the staffing plan recommended above to evaluate when new faculty resources may need to be added and the training that it might require.

Area: *Student Housing*

DRBU recognizes the need for additional dormitory space to house female students as enrollment increases. The expected expansion of the MA program will very likely include the enrollment of international students.

Recommendation: Revise Housing Plan to include International Students

We recommend that housing for international students be added to the current study underway for dormitory space for female students. Off-campus housing may be the space solution but transportation needs may surface as a new problem.

Area: Compensation

We are moved by the egalitarian compensation model at DRBU. It is mission consistent and demonstrates the shared commitment to wholeness that is the foundation of a Buddhist view of the world, as we non-Buddhists understand it. We translated the WSCUC focus on compensation as a call to better align policy with functions performed (i.e., move away from the current model to one that may represent the norm at peer institutions). We believe that the DRBU response is prudent and we offer the following recommendations in support of the spirit we witnessed during our visit.

Recommendation: Develop a Succession Plan for Required Administrative and Staff Support Functions

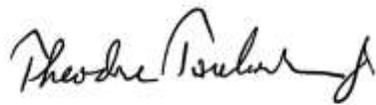
This suggests the other side of the human resource planning that was begun with the five-year plan for faculty. There are there obvious successors for key administrative spots such as President and Dean of Academics.

Recommendation: Develop Compensation Data Base

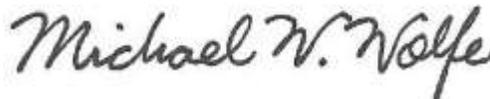
We recommend that Institutional Research (1) identify peer institutions, (2) collect publicly available data on compensation at these institutions, and (3) create a cost of living baseline for DRBU.

Recommendation: Comparative Analysis of Current Compensation

We suggest that current DRBU compensation be compared with peers to establish any “gap” that exists in compensation. We assume that given the egalitarian philosophy currently in place that DRBU will be lower than any peer. Annual updates to the data will reveal if the gap is growing or not. Also, monitoring local cost of living vs changes in DRBU compensation will establish another factor that may be necessary to address in any new compensation plan.



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