

Institutional Midterm Report
in Support of Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Submitted by:

Deep Springs College
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to

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges
March 2013

Certification of the Midterm Report

March 2013

To: Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

From: Deep Springs College
HC 72 Box 45001
Dyer, NV 89010-9803

This Institutional Midterm Report is submitted for the purpose of assisting in the determination of the institution's accreditation status

We certify that there was broad participation by the campus community, and we believe the Midterm Report accurately reflects the nature and substance of this institution

Signed:

David Neidorf, President

Dave Hitz, Chairman of the Trustees

Justin Kim, Midterm Report Preparer

Laura Marcus, Assistant to the President

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I. Statement of Report Preparation

This Midterm Report was prepared as a group effort by the following individuals: David Neidorf (President), Kenneth Cardwell (Dean), Justin Kim (Visiting Professor), Laura Marcus (President's Assistant) and various members of the Faculty, Staff and Student Body.

Preparation occurred in several stages. First, there was a thorough review of the previous self-study with emphasis on the visiting team's recommendations and the evidence of its implementation into the college's program. This included a review of the planning agendas within the report and the evidence of those outcomes. This phase was followed by a collection of all evidence to support any modifications or changes in planning, institutional procedures and institutional record keeping, as well as any overall changes in the college's relationship to deliberation, procedure and learning outcomes as recommended by the visiting team in 2011. Finally, we drafted the Midterm Report to include narrative evaluations, reporting and supporting evidence as outlined in the guidelines for the midterm report. Included in the report are the planning agendas for the maintenance of these changes in policy and the accompanying short and long-term goals

Preparation was spread out over several academic terms, mainly to accommodate students new to their elected positions who needed some guidelines with regard to the standard procedures, and also to accommodate the college's long-term planning agendas, including incorporating learning outcomes to all aspects of the program. As main administrative coordinator, Laura Marcus was essential in synthesizing the supporting evidence and helping to assemble Deep Springs' internal resources and reports into a database of administrative work at the college.

II. A Brief History of Deep Springs

L. L. Nunn and the Founding of Deep Springs

Deep Springs College was founded in 1917 by L. L. Nunn, an industrialist who helped develop alternating-current power plants across the United States from New York to points west. These plants required technicians with good backgrounds and high-quality educations, and Nunn began founding his own schools to supply them with both. Two remain: the Telluride Association (a trust based in a residential house at Cornell University) and Deep Springs College.

Deep Springs continues to educate young men according to the principles Nunn espoused: the integration of manual work and academics and the development of character, especially in the values of self-reliance and civic responsibility. These principles are exhibited in Grey Book, a compendium of Nunn's writings and correspondence with early Deep Springs Student Bodies. Nunn's beliefs continue to guide the college and to this day form the core of the college's mission.

Overview of the College

Deep Springs is a two year liberal arts college with several unique characteristics:

- The Deep Springs Student Body is all-male.
- All students attend for free—a full scholarship, including room and board, equivalent to about \$52,000.
- The college is located in a remote high-desert valley in eastern California, just over the Nevada border. Deep Springs is the only presence in the valley, with the nearest town approximately forty-five minutes away over a mountain pass. Except for emergencies and religious services, Deep Springs students observe an isolation policy which requires them to remain in the valley for the whole of each seven-week term.
- The college is organized in order to give students considerable responsibility and ownership in their own educations. Students serve on and chair the college's four standing committees, which select the incoming classes, hire and review the faculty, select courses, review their peers, and oversee public relations and college publications.

Three Pillars

Deep Springs is structured according to the principles of three pillars: academics, labor and self-governance.

- **Academics.** The Deep Spring academic program is rated among the best in the country. Its success is partly due to the caliber of the faculty the college is able to

- attract, but it is also the product of the involvement and investment of the highly-motivated Student Body. Each student's participation is extensive: not only does he have a say in which courses will be taught, he also takes a great deal of responsibility in participating in discussions and ensuring that learning is instructional, collaborative, and maintains high standards of rigor.
- **Self-governance.** Deep Springs students are considered the beneficial owners of the college during their time here. Each student is a member of the Student Body, the governing body that manages and oversees the college (in conjunction with the college's administration and the board trustees), ensuring that Deep Springs adheres to its core purpose, principles, and mission. As mentioned above, each student serves on one of the four standing committees: the Applications Committee solicits applications from prospective students and selects the final class to admit; the Curriculum Committee hires and evaluates faculty; the Review Committee evaluates student performance; and the Communications Committee oversees the college's public relations and produces many of its publications. The Student Body elects a new president every two terms (approximately 14 weeks, or one semester). Two students sit on the college's board of trustees.
 - **Labor.** The Deep Spring program includes not only academics but also a ranch of *** head of cattle and a farming operation that produces approximately *** tons of alfalfa per year. In addition, students are involved in the management of a dairy, sheep, pigs, and the college's boarding house, where meals are cooked and served. Each student is assigned a new labor position on average every 7 weeks, during which time his work is supervised by a staff member. The Student Body elects a student Labor Commissioner approximately every 14 weeks who serves as commissioner/foreman of the labor program and coordinates with staff to ensure that program and the ranch, farm, grounds, and boarding house (etc.) operations run smoothly.

Demographics

Deep Springs College enrolls approximately 13 students in each class, for a total Student Body of 26. Beyond the parameters of all-male enrollment, the application is highly rigorous and includes two stages. In the first stage, applicants are asked to write three original essays, their high-school transcripts and test scores, and teacher recommendations. The subset who make it to the second round must write another *** essays, supply a sample of their high-school work, and visit the college for several days to observe and participate in the college's operations, including labor and self-governance, and to be interviewed by the Applications Committee. Recruitment efforts include profiles in college guidebooks (such as the Princeton Review) and in appropriate media coverage; the Communications Committee also publishes a viewbook. Deep Springs seeks whenever possible to recruit international students and those from various geographic, religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. After completing their two years at Deep Springs, students generally transfer to four-year colleges to finish their undergraduate degrees. Deep Springs students routinely transfer to Harvard, Yale, Brown, Stanford, the University of Chicago, Swarthmore, UC Berkeley, and Reed.

III. Response to Team Recommendations and the Commission Action Letter

Introduction

Deep Springs College has taken recommendations from the 2011 Team Visit Evaluation Report seriously. They are enumerated below:

1. In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that Deep Springs integrate existing planning processes and make clear to the college community the ways in which all planning processes are institutionalized.
2. In order to improve institutional effectiveness, the team recommends that Deep Springs expand and enhance its development and assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) – particularly to the two pillars of labor and self-governance

(From p. 15 of the report) “The team found it difficult to locate documents that clearly summarized the planning goals and processes; instead they were found in committee minutes and board reports. For someone unfamiliar with the college, it would help if these goals and plans were summarized into a document or documents. The recent library report is a good example of a brief, clear summary that outlines immediate and longer term goals.”

In the recommendations from the 2010 report, the team noted that Deep Springs does an excellent job of encouraging thoughtful deliberation regarding the mission and governance of the college, but needs to integrate this into a process that facilitates more formalized (and potentially more effective) planning, record keeping and communication. A key area of concentration in this regard is the expansion of SLO reviews to the other pedagogical aspects of the program.

Deep Springs acknowledges that the college needs to address the challenges it faces in institutional memory and organization. While the college has cultivated an environment in which thoughtful discussion and deliberation thrive, there has been less emphasis on more formal institutional procedures. Also, the relatively frequent turnover among students, faculty and staff has made it more challenging to maintain continuity in terms of implementing policies. While Deep Springs is meeting the goals of its mission, the recommendations from the visiting team provided perspective on ways in which the college could be more effectively pursuing policies that make these goals both more concrete and more accessible to the college community and outside parties. In the larger perspective of Deep Springs and its mission, the recommendations potentially benefit students by creating more effective institutional structures, modeling these benefits for

students and letting students participate and engage in creating this structure. In terms of college organization, these recommendations also provided the potential for institutional continuity through more formal recording and implementation of policies and procedures.

Since the last team visit, Deep Springs has worked to change its organizational culture with regard to these recommendations. Consequently, the college has set goals for implementation of more formal procedures for recording and reporting discussions, committee work, policy changes and other administrative procedures. In the context of the existing Deep Springs culture these have been identified as challenges for the college to address. For example, students have long been acculturated to engage in the college's pillar of self-government through meetings and debate, but there has been comparatively less of our limited energy devoted to creating formal documentation to make these processes transparent outside of our educational community. Implementation of more formal goals and practices has begun, and we acknowledge that this is and will be an ongoing endeavor for the college. To this end, goals have been set with specific targets: partly to meet the recommendations set by the visiting team and partly to introduce potential benefits and institutional standards of accountability. Deep Springs also recognizes that the effectiveness of these changes will become more apparent over time as successive groups of students, faculty and staff are able to benefit from more formal procedures of planning processes, record keeping and communication.

Response to Team Recommendation via specific targeted goals, changes in planning and policy and supporting evidence

- Academic Policy Review Process (APRP)
- Review of Deep Springs' three pillars regarding SLOs
 - o Academic Program self-evaluations regarding SLOs
 - o Labor Program self-evaluation regarding SLOs
 - o Student Self-Governance self-evaluation regarding SLOs
- Database of Student Reports
 - o Annual Committee Reports
 - o Passovers
 - o Trustee Reports
- Student Services
 - o Library Report
 - o Mental Health Services
 - o Medical Health Services and Emergency Report
- Hard Copy Database

Academic Policy Review Process (APRP)

In the last report, Deep Springs had begun implementing the Academic Policy Review Process (APRP), a process for oversight of the college's academic policy through annual

review by the Curriculum Committee with input from the Faculty Committee. The APRP's goals include:

- Adhering to the mission of the college by providing a platform for students to engage in self-governance and take ownership of their own education.
- Providing a schedule with specific dates for review, deliberation, sharing of committee input and submission of final recommendations to the president and the Trustees of Deep Springs (TDS)
- Creating a record of institutional deliberation and planning for use by successive committees, students and faculty to see: (1) How committees work, (2) How and why policies may have been changed and (3) The effectiveness of these changes.

The relevant committees have been holding regular meetings according to schedule. The APRP timeframe has been integrated into the larger academic calendar. It has provided a more formal platform for examining college policies and goals as well as more transparent records and communication of discussions, deliberations and decisions.

Evidence

- APRP Reports (including sample minutes) → See Appendix A8
- Current Academic Policy (in College Handbook) → See Appendix C

Review of DS Three Pillars regarding SLOs

Academic Program – Self-Evaluation with regards to SLOs

In the last report, Deep Springs formalized a procedure for evaluating Student Learning Outcomes and course effectiveness through use of the standards set out in the document: Goals of the Deep Springs Academic Program (GODSAP). The GODSAP is used as a standard for learning outcomes of individual students as well as the effectiveness of faculty and the courses they offer. Course descriptions clearly state which GODSAP goals are incorporated into the course and its constituent materials, assignments and discussion. At end of each semester, in addition to grades and written evaluations of student performance, faculty write course reviews evaluating how the material did or did not meet the goals set forth, and any recommendations for what might be done differently in the future to increase effectiveness towards fulfilling SLOs.

These GODSAP-based evaluations have been effective in setting specific standards and goals for learning outcomes. They have also provided a way for faculty to design and execute courses that meet these goals through the use of appropriate materials, assignments and teaching methods. The GODSAP has also provided a means for faculty to gauge how effective they are in meeting these goals, fulfilling SLOs and setting benchmarks and standards for future courses.

Labor Program Self-Evaluation with regards to SLOs

Deep Springs has begun to incorporate this system for evaluation to the other two pillars of Deep Springs program: labor and self-governance. In terms of Labor, the 2009 Labor Committee created the Goals of the Deep Springs Labor Program (GODSLAP), a set of goals and standards applicable to the Labor Program. Each member of staff is asked to assess and evaluate his or her pedagogical and practical engagement with students with reference to the GODSLAP

At the beginning of each year, staff members write a description of their role in working with students, including pedagogical and practical goals, with regard to the GODSLAP. At the end of each year, staff members write a review of how they have or have not met these goals, including recommendations for any changes in practice, materials or communication that may increase effectiveness in fulfilling SLOs. This evaluation process is in addition to regular annual administrative and student evaluations of staff.

Staff have felt that this evaluation process is in need of fine-tuning, and this means that full implementation of this process has been slowed by turnover of non-academic staff, whose jobs involve working most directly with the labor program. Since the 2010 report, six of the eight positions have been filled by new personnel, and these people have needed a year to develop a full understanding of the college program and their roles in it before turning to fine-tuning of the formal evaluation process in the labor program. Beginning in the Fall of 2013 the staff tuned to this process in earnest, and the process has included to include consultation with students and board members scheduled for late March 2014. By Summer of 2014 we expect the process to be complete.

Student Self-Governance Self-Evaluation with regards to SLOs

The current Student Body is in the process of drafting the Goals of the Deep Springs Self-Governance Program (GODSSGAP). The GODSSGAP uses existing goals statements as guides for setting specific goals with regard to fulfilling SLOs within the Deep Springs College mission. Once this document has been approved, with input and guidance from faculty, staff and the administration, the GODSSGAP will be referenced for annual review of student self-governance. This review will take place in two sections: first at the beginning of the year in the Student Body's ideological discussion on self-governance; next, in conversation between the college's President and the Student Body leadership, the result of which will be a document detailing how goals were or were not met and recommendations for future policies and practices to increase institutional effectiveness with regard to self-governance goals and outcomes. In addition to this, the institutional review of the self-governance pillar is scheduled to begin shortly after the current review of the academic pillar is completed. This standing committee will work to solidify the goals, practices and short and long-term planning agendas with regard to the self-governance pillar and goals and learning outcomes.

Summary: Over the last five years, we have completed the college's first review of the labor program, and updated (in a manner that amounts to full re-invention) formal review of the academic program. Work on review of the self-governance "pillar" is commencing, and our goal is to complete this within two years. After this work is done, the college will be well-positioned to formally review one of its three curricular pillars every two years, without having to construct the review process and pedagogical history from scratch. The goal is to conduct a formal review of each pillar during each six-year accreditation cycle. We are in good shape to have done so by the time of our next full report in 2016.

Evidence

- Labor Report → See Appendix A7
- Academic Report and Supporting Documents → See Appendix A6
- GODSAP and GODSLAP → See Appendices A3, A4
- GODSAP course descriptions and evaluations → See Appendix A5
- Committee meeting notes: TDS, Curriculum and Faculty Committees → See Appendices A9, B8, F4

Implementation of Strategic Planning

One of the visiting team's recommendations was that the college "integrate existing planning processes." To this end, the college was fortunate to obtain the donated services of an expert, Mr. Robert Marcus, Executive Director for Financial Planning and Budget at Butler University in Indiana. Mr. Marcus was able to spend seven weeks in residence at Deep Springs during January and February of 2014, during which time he conducted a workshop in strategic and financial planning for staff and interested students at Deep Springs. In addition to helping us to establish an appropriate strategic planning model, the workshop went through the phases of strategic planning for three of our five major operations sectors. The college's isolation precludes gathering all stakeholders at once; we plan to finish all five internally, and then expand the conversation on that basis to the Trustees and alumni for further revision. This process should allow us to integrate our planning in a single document that is revised on an ongoing basis. Finally, Mr Marcus worked with staff to create an agenda-tracking format for implementation of the fully developed plan. This way we can integrate the final results into the tracking format without having to re-invent it.

Evidence

- Consultant Bio → See Appendix H1
- Planning Format → See Appendix H2
- Working Planning Documents → See Appendix H3
- Draft Metrics and Agenda Tracking → See Appendix H4

Database of Student Reports

Committee Reports to TDS

The college has begun to institute more formal reporting requirements for committee chairs and other student leaders as part of the biannual reports to the Trustees of Deep Springs College (TDS). This provides students an important opportunity to organize and discuss upcoming committee tasks while reflecting on work done over past year. It also allows them to evaluate the committee's performance and advise on possible goals and benchmarks for the upcoming year. Committee reports are written twice a year to coincide with TDS meetings; once in Term II and once in Term V. The first report lays out the committee's proposed agenda for the year including any changes from last year's agenda. The second report evaluates the committee's performance and makes recommendations to the next year's chair. In the context of these reports, recommendations do not determine the next year's agenda; the sitting chair is responsible for running the committee, including setting the agenda.

Supporting evidence, such as committee meetings and notes, is included in these reports. All reports are kept in both digital and hard copy databases.

In addition to these semiannual reports, each committee is responsible for updating the "Passover" (an instructional and introductory manual for committee members).

Committee Passovers include:

- A description of the committee
- The responsibilities of the committee
- The purpose of the committee in relation to the college's mission
- A brief history of the committee

Committee reports include:

- Any proposed changes in committee policy or practice
- Evaluations of changes instituted over the past year with regards to institutional effectiveness and self-governance SLOs
- A proposed calendar including deadlines
- A planning agenda including recommendations to the next committee and chair

Reports are kept in a digital database as well as a hard copy database in the college's main office. The college keeps the five most recent reports immediately available to current chairs and committee members.

Because these changes are still being formalized, evidence for this report includes the first versions of these retooled committee reports for this academic year.

Evidence

- Library Report → See Appendix D1
- Committee Reports (including sample minutes) → See Appendix B8
- TDS Reports → See Appendix F3

Passovers

Passovers are written descriptions for students that detail the responsibilities of labor and elected self-governance positions. Passovers contain general information about these roles as well as perspectives from students who have previously held these positions and function as collective informational databases. They are updated at the end of the Spring Semester, in May, and on an ad hoc basis as needed. They are kept in a digital database as well as a hard copy database in the college's main office.

Evidence

- Labor Passovers → See Appendix B6
- Committee Chair Passovers → See Appendix B7

TDS Reports

Chairs of each committee are responsible for providing reports and updates at each of the semiannual Trustees' meeting (fall and spring). These are rolled into the larger report which includes updates from the Dean, President, Operations Manager, Staff, Student Trustees and Student Body President.

Both TDS Reports and Passovers provide a comprehensive record of student positions, committee work, annual projects, guidelines and recommendations. They function as a resource to help incoming students and newly-elected committee chairs get some historical background and procedural guidelines for various responsibilities including: running meetings, setting an agenda, planning, scheduling, interviewing and writing peer evaluations.

Evidence

- Recent TDS Reports → See Appendix F3

Reviews of Student Services

Library Report

In their response to Deep Springs' last self-study, the visiting team pointed to the Library Report as a good example of concrete record-keeping regarding a specific aspect of the Deep Springs program. The template from this report has been used as guide for other reports. The most recent library report gives updates on subscriptions, acquisitions, the current status of the library and its collection, general policies and a planning agenda

Evidence

- Library Report → See Appendix D1
- JSTOR Subscription → See Appendix D2

- Internet subscriptions → See Appendix E5

Mental Health Services Review / Evaluations

Deep Springs has undertaken regular reviews of mental health services provided. It does this using a questionnaire asking students how often they have used mental health services and how they would describe the effectiveness of the counselor. These evaluations are used to determine the effectiveness of the services available.

Evidence

- Evaluation of Counseling Services → See Appendix D4

Medical Health Services

Deep Springs keeps regular incident reports for any medical accidents or emergencies. Incident reports are kept in the First Aid facility and reviewed regularly to assess the frequency of accidents and other medical incidents, what kind of incidents occurred, and how the college has responded. This information is included in the semiannual Trustees report.

Deep Spring has set policies and plans in case of emergencies. These are reviewed annually by staff and students to assess effectiveness in instances of emergency and clarify procedures and protocol. All information on Medical health Services and Emergency Reports are included in the college's handbook.

Evidence

- TDS Reports → See Appendix F3
- Handbook Emergency Policies → See Appendix C

Hard Copy Database

From page 15 of the Visiting Team's 2011 report:

“The team found it difficult to locate documents that clearly summarized the planning goals and processes; instead they were found in committee minutes and board reports. For someone unfamiliar with the college, it would help if these goals and plans were summarized into a document or documents. The recent library report is a good example of a brief, clear summary that outlines immediate and longer term goals.”

The college now has both digital and hard copy databases of records and reports for easy access by all members of community. These databases do not include documents that might compromise confidentiality, but are designed to provide students and staff access to familiarize themselves with positions, committees, responsibilities, policies and procedures. The hard copy database has records going back 5 years. The digital database

has copies going back at least this far. All students are required to review database information relevant to their labor, elected, and committee positions at beginning of year (or, in case of labor positions which change regularly, at beginning of each labor position). This database is a critical supplement to hands-on training and contains authorized versions of practices and policies. This also offers students the chance to see what a comprehensive report looks like, gain greater appreciation for collective memory and gain insight into writing these documents. As stated above, updated Passovers are due at the end of the spring semester each year. Annual committee reports are due prior to each meeting of the board of trustees.

Documents to be kept in Hard Copy Database

- Passovers for Labor Positions and Committee Chairs → See Appendices B6 and B7
- Committee Reports → See Appendices B8, F3
- Library Report → See Appendix D1
- Handbook Emergency Policies → See Appendix C
- GODSAP and GODSLAP → See Appendices A3, A4
- Other relevant documents, including:
 - o Samples Course Evaluations → See Appendix A10
 - o Sample Rehire Recommendations → See Appendix A12
 - o Sample Press Release Statements → See Appendix ^5

Evidence

- All of the above

Response to Self-Identified Issues in the Planning Agenda

Below, please find the Planning Agenda from Deep Springs College's 2010 Self Study:

Speaking as the head of the 2010 Deep Springs College self-study team, writing this report has been incredibly informative. In previous years, the college appeared may have appeared wary of the accreditation process. It is possible be that members of the college's administration were unsure if the unique aspects of the college's program could be adequately described or discussed: the pillars of labor and student self-governance and more particularly, students' beneficial ownership of their education. All of these aspects create potentially interesting relationships between standards and processes and general accountability.

In responding to the previous visiting team's recommendations, the college has worked to use the standards as a guide to improve the existing college program and operation. For this study, the standards (and the larger framework of accountability) have been useful in providing perspective with which Deep Springs can scrutinize itself with more objectivity. This includes:

- *More accountability in terms of standards and policies*
- *More accountability in terms of formalizing standards and policies to help ensure that all aspects of the college's programs are working in concert and adhering to the college's mission*
- *More formal evaluative processes to provide venues and guidelines for discussion as well as better records*
- *More long-term planning based on these formal standards, policies and processes to help ensure long-term institutional memory and reference for future discussions*
- *Maintain and cultivate the perspective that comes from this accountability; helping the college make long term plans*

This last point is especially critical at Deep Springs College where the size of the college makes it necessary to maintain both financial and personnel resources.

Planning Ahead

Perhaps the largest goal facing the college, in regards to this self-study, is integrating a culture of accountability into the Deep Springs College operation and pedagogy. More important is integrating this in a way that comports with the college's overall mission; particularly in light of the college's historical wariness of outside influences. Deep Springs stands by its mission wholeheartedly. The core principles of liberal arts education in concert with the pillars of labor and student self-government and students' beneficial ownership of their educations create a unique and valuable learning environment.

Deep Springs College feels that it has met the standards outlined by WASC/ACCJC. At the same time, the college is in the process of adjusting to new ways of using standards and evaluative processes. The next five years will be critical in terms of using the existing framework and refining it. This includes continued scrutiny of the college's use of standards, policies and evaluative processes including:

- *Continued compliance with WASC/ACCJC standards*
- *Continued adherence to college's mission statement*

- *Continued refinement of standards, policies and evaluative processes based on input from all relevant constituencies*
- *Continued refinement of data collection and accounting practices, based on input from all relevant constituencies, to support a culture that is more conscientious and transparent and helps inform both short and long-term planning*
- *Incorporate all of these practices into the larger culture of the college in a way that maintains, informs and improves the integral parts of Deep Springs College's educational program.*

In terms of integrating a culture of accountability, the current indicators for success are good. Reactions to recently implemented standards and policies have been positive; particularly when framed in the context of accountability, shared standards and long-term institutional memory. In addition to this, the relatively frequent turnover in students and personnel makes it possible to accelerate integrated change. Taking into account the rigor with which the Deep Springs community approaches most endeavors, the prospects for continued compliance with WASC/ACCJC standards are, to say the least, extremely favorable.

The 2011 visiting team's recommendations fit extremely well with the college's self-identified planning agenda. Within the context of more accountability and more formal policies and record-keeping, the recommendations from ACCJC provided specific examples of where the college could and should direct these energies to meet the existing standards while also benefiting the college's organization, institutional memory and overall effectiveness.

Because of the constant influx of new students, there is great potential for institutional change at Deep Springs. At the same time, the college values its rich traditions. The 2011 visiting team did an excellent job of working with the college: recognizing the unique nature of Deep Springs' mission while holding the college accountable to standards outlined by ACCJC. The team also allowed slightly more flexible guidelines on meeting these standards, especially considering the broad pedagogical nature of Deep Springs and the fact that, in accordance with this mission, students maintain a great deal of ownership regarding their own educations. While it may be necessary for the college to provide more evidence of learning outcomes and institutional planning and records, ACCJC acknowledged that, according to the college's mission, this must be done in a way that did not interfere with students' ownership of a large part of the college's operation and must take into account the less obvious ways in which the overall mission and structure of the program work.

SLOs

To this end, policies such as use of the GODSAP in measuring SLOs have been very effective. By creating a standard of goals and practices for use by the faculty, it sets a clear benchmark in terms of specific skills and abilities for courses to incorporate. It has oriented the faculty toward a shared set of goals, focused attention on a more specific use

of academic resources and maintained some latitude for faculty in terms of the kinds of courses and materials offered.

The translation of the GODSAP into standards corresponding to the labor and self-governance aspects of the Deep Springs program has been a source of much discussion and deliberation. Using the collective resources of students, staff, faculty and administration, Deep Springs has worked hard to incorporate its core mission into other aspects of the college's program. The result is a set of goals and standards that stays true to the college's essential mission while also setting concrete goals for specific learning outcomes. At the same time, the projected timeline for regular review allows each member of the community an opportunity to contribute, help evaluate how that aspect of the program is working, make any necessary recommendations and gauge the effectiveness of the program in producing learning outcomes.

Institutional Memory and Record Keeping

Perhaps just as important as use of the GODSAP (and accompanying goals for the other aspects of the program) is the college's goal to institute more formal procedures for record-keeping and reporting as well as the evaluation of student services including mental health and health services. Deep Springs is now working to formalize these processes, partly to benefit successive students and committees and partly as a pedagogical experience in reviewing and assessing their work. Reports will detail the work of the committee, any set goals, their effectiveness in fulfilling these goals and recommendations to future chairs and committees.

In the long-term, this will help students lead more effectively by using input from multiple, experienced resources.

Overview

One of the most useful aspects of the 2011 Self Study and response was the fact that the visiting team was able to acknowledge the unique mission of Deep Springs while giving concrete recommendations and guidelines for implementing those recommendations. Deep Springs views these as both short and long-term goals. While some of these recommendations are already being implemented, the nature of the college requires that other policies and procedures be evaluated and introduced in a way that works well with existing structures that have proven to be historically effective. To this end, Deep Springs sees these changes as part of a longer process. It is the hope of the college that, by the next scheduled self-study in 2016, these policies and practices (and their outcomes) will have become even more a part of institutional practices.

Updates on Substantive Change in Progress, Pending or Planned

In March of 2012, the Trustees of Deep Springs (TDS) initiated a long-planned period of community discussion about whether or not Deep Springs should become a coeducational college. Everyone willing to do so (faculty, staff, students, alumni, and donors) engaged in a six-month long and deeply passionate discussion. It involved written and verbal contributions from hundreds of alumni and friends—we heard from, by the end, over 25% of alumni. Besides reading hundreds of pages of archives and alumni input, board members traveled to hold discussions in six cities across the country. They met three separate times with the current student body to discuss the students' evolving views. The board scheduled an additional time to meet in the valley a month before the final vote, dedicating extra time for reading college documents and for open-ended discussion with plenty of time for second thoughts and reconsideration before the final vote in September. (Regrettably, the two trustees who are opposing the decision in court did not attend that meeting.)

The trustees also considered recommendations in favor of coeducation from both the student body and the faculty. Finally, concerned to maximize the input of educational professionals who know the college well, and who—unlike most board members—have dedicated years of their lives to the daily and concrete implementation of L.L. Nunn's educational vision, TDS members who wished to do so discussed the question with all of the men living who have been President of Deep Springs for a year or more—Ed Cronk, Chris Breiseth, Brandt Kehoe, Jack Newell, Ross Peterson, and David Neidorf. The result was unanimous; every one of them recommended a change to coeducation, and specifically for the sake of better fulfilling the college's mission.

The end result of this wide and extensive consultation was a broad agreement among TDS, administration, faculty and students. In a final vote held in September of 2011, only two members of TDS voted against coeducation. In the annals of major institutional changes, an 83% supermajority is an exceptionally strong level of agreement.

Since the college had been founded originally as an all-male college by a deed of trust written by the founder, the Trustees went to the local Superior Court to request permission to interpret the trust so as to permit the admission of women, or, failing that, to ask the judge to modify the trust so that the college can better fulfill its mission to prepare leaders dedicated to the service of humanity in light of changing social conditions. When this petition was filed, the two Trustees who had voted against coeducation filed a legal objection in defense of a literal reading of the line in the trust referring to “promising young men.”

As a result, the college has been embroiled in a complex lawsuit since February of 2012. Legal counsel suggested proceeding with the recruitment of a coeducational class during the Fall of 2012, with the caveat that there was some chance that the admission of women would be barred. In January of 2013 the local judge did issue a temporary injunction forbidding the admission of women to the college pending the final outcome of the initial petition. The legal process to resolve that petition is ongoing, and we expect it to persist for several years.

The college has been fortunate that a single donor has underwritten legal costs in their entirety, so that the lawsuit has placed no direct burden on the college's finances. In addition, donor response to the TDS resolution to change the admissions policy as soon as it may be legally done has been on balance mildly positive; there is no reason to think that it has diminished the stability of the college.

At their regularly scheduled spring 2013 meeting, March 22 - 24, the Trustees of the Deep Springs Trust and the Trustee Board Members of the Deep Springs Public-Benefit Corporation passed the following Resolution of Continued Support for Coeducation:

The Trustees of Deep Springs have carefully considered the purpose of Deep Springs, how best to achieve this purpose, and changes in society since the college was founded. The Trustees continue to support a transition to a coeducational body.

At the same meeting, the Trustees issued the following statement in response to the recent legal ruling that prevents coeducation from proceeding in 2013:

We are disappointed with the Court's initial ruling on February 13, 2013, but we accept the Court's decision and will not admit young women to the class of 2013. All of the Trustees, except one, remain committed to the Board's 2011 decision to transition to coeducation. We strongly believe that this is the best policy for achieving L.L. Nunn's purpose for Deep Springs, best for its students both now and in years to come, and the best means to assure the future viability and relevance of the institution. Consequently, we will continue to pursue a legal path to coeducation.

There are several legal theories supporting coeducation at Deep Springs. The judge suggested that we consider them one at a time, so this first decision addressed only the narrow issue of interpretation of the trust. As a board, we are appealing that decision. We are also proceeding with our request that the court modify the terms of the trust. There are other options, but this is where we will begin. We wish the process were faster, but in the end we hope and expect to be successful in our efforts to fulfill L.L. Nunn's goal of educating students who are committed to a life of service and responsibility.

Deep Springs recognizes that a shift to a coeducational student body falls under ACCJC's "substantive change" rules, and that a substantive change report will be required before implementation. The college hired outside consultants, and had transition planning about 75% completed when the judge issued the injunction, and that injunction also bars us from spending any employee time or other college resources on transition planning. For this reason transition planning has been set aside pending the results of the legal process.

The college has tried to be completely transparent to its extended community and the public at large about this process. A "Coeducation" page has been set up on our website under the 'News and Events' tab, and we post there each document filed with the court, as well as periodic newsletters mailed to our alumni and supporters. A few of these reports are included in the appendixes to this report.

The staff at Deep Springs have worked hard to ensure that the planned transition does not distract from or de-value the experience of the college for current students, for whom it

remains a very challenging and high-quality education. The coeducation question having been decided, the current students are more free of debate about the issue than were their predecessors.

One of the Trustees who is opposing coeducation in court has since completed his term on the board and rotated off. Although the presence of the remaining opposing trustee on the board has naturally made the routine work of board discussions sometimes awkward, the Trustees have adapted to this and continued their ongoing work of oversight and policy formation as before. The only disruption of routine work has been in the case of the board's self-evaluation process. Self-evaluation naturally raises the question of whether or not having a sitting board member who is publically criticizing board policy in newspapers and to students and alumni is in violation of the board's statement of ethics. The difficulty of deciding how the policy of "acting as a unity" once decisions are made should be applied to public criticism of a decision under legal review, and the difficulty posed by the need for any further discussion of this matter to require formal legal representation and procedures, has resulted in the postponement of regularly scheduled board self-evaluation.

Evidence

- Selection of Public Documents → See Appendix J1