



International Site Review
Report on: Thailand, Bangkok and Cha-am Campuses
April 8, 2015

Introduction

In June 2014, Provost Julian Schuster announced the initiation of a series of comprehensive reviews of Webster's international campuses, to include assessment of each campus' facilities, financial matters, human resources, country-specific accreditation (if applicable), academics, student academic support, student life and services, and safety.

This initiative is a next step in the process of continuous improvement of academic and administrative units and programs begun in 2011. Comprehensive Academic Program Review and Prioritization was completed in 2011-2012, reviews of the extended domestic (metropolitan and military) sites were completed in 2013 (and updated in 2014), and administrative and academic support units (including Financial Aid, Human Resources, Academic Advising, and the Faculty Development Center) have been completed, are underway, or are forthcoming. The purpose of the reviews is to provide a view of how well Webster is delivering services and programs, to solicit recommendations for improvement, and to collect baseline data and information for purposes of future planning and review.

The international campus site review initiative is also aligned with all four of the strategic planning themes: 1) Global Innovation Through Inclusive Leadership; 2) Global, Student-Centered Experience; 3) Network of Academic and Operational Excellence; 4) Sustainable and Strategic Development.

The experience with domestic site review and academic program review provided a foundation from which to conduct comprehensive reviews of the international campuses including the administrative aspects (e.g., facilities, financial, staffing) as well as academic (e.g., program quality and vibrancy, academic support services). It was clear that the international campus site review would be complex due to 1) the unique features of each campus; and 2) the logistics of the review, including travel and varying time zones. Thus, the Provost determined that 1) reviews would be staggered; and 2) the first review team, constituted as a Task Force, would develop a template for review of the other international campuses.

Webster University – Thailand (WUT), with locations in Bangkok and Cha-am, was selected as the first of the international campuses to be reviewed.

A Task Force of faculty, staff and administrators was appointed. Because of the sheer amount of data to be gathered and aspects of WUT to be reviewed, the Task Force was divided into sub-groups. Sub-groups gathered information and made preliminary observations between August 2014 and January 2015. Preliminary reports from each sub-group, including recommendations, were collated by the Task Force in February. The current document is the summary report that reflects the work of the Task Force.

The work of the Task Force included examining materials and documents as well as communicating with Thailand administration, faculty, staff, students and board members both via e-mail and through interviews in Thailand. The working list of areas includes: infrastructure (e.g., facilities, financial matters, HR, staffing), safety, academics, academic support, faculty, student life, admissions/recruitment/enrollment management and communication.

Thailand

Webster University – Thailand was established in 1999, Webster’s 7th international location, and is the only U.S. university in Thailand accredited both in the U.S. (by the Higher Learning Commission) and in Thailand (by the Thai Ministry of Education). In the past five years, it has doubled its number of students and has grown to serve almost 500 students, with approximately 300 undergraduate students in Cha-am and close to 200 students, the vast majority of whom are graduate students, in Bangkok. The campus currently meets its overall enrollment targets and balances its budget.

Like Webster’s other international campuses (with the exception of China locations), Webster University –Thailand is led by a Director, who reports to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Director of International Programs. There are full and part-time staff covering academic and administrative functions. There are also full and part-time faculty.

Dual accreditation provides unique challenges. The policies and procedures applied for the Higher Learning Commission are quite different from those of the Thai Ministry of Education. Both accrediting agencies are predicated upon assuring a quality university education, a standard Webster University fully supports. Each uses different rubrics and measurements to demonstrate quality. Webster University respects and adheres to both.

This review examined the following areas:

- Campus Facilities in Bangkok and Cha-am
- Student Housing
- Safety
- Financial Matters
- Student Affairs and Student Life Services
- Student Academic Support and Other Student Services
- Academics and Thai Accreditation
- Communications

Each of these topics is summarized below with a set of Key Findings and Recommendations.

Background/Process

The Webster –Thailand Task Force had a three-fold charge:

1. To set a framework, or template, for review of all international campuses. This framework lists the administrative and academic areas for review as well as baseline data to be collected from each campus.
2. To recognize and review those unique elements possessed by each international campus.
3. To review WUT, addressing the common areas identified as important to all international campuses as well as areas of interest or concern identified as unique to Thailand.

The Thailand Task Force began meeting in July 2014. Several steps were agreed upon and completed.

1. Data Collection: To the extent possible, data was generated in St. Louis, to provide commonality and to avoid taxing international campus staff. For example: enrollment reports and financial reports.
2. Determining Areas of Review: The team divided into three sub-groups: 1) Facilities and Finance; 2) Academic and Accreditation; 3) Communication. Each group developed a list of topics and questions to cover.
3. Visits to Thailand: Each of the three sub-groups visited Thailand. The Facilities and Finance sub-group visited Thailand in September 2014; the Academics and Accreditation sub-group visited in November 2014; and the Communications group visited in January 2015. Each sub-group produced a report and proposed recommendations.
4. Information collection: A dedicated e-mail account was established for the process, providing a central location for compiling information for the Task Force.
5. Sub-group reports: Each sub-group prepared a report including Key Findings and Recommendations.
6. Completion of this summary report.
7. Action plans developed in collaboration with WUT to implement recommendations.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Campus Facilities at Bangkok and Cha-am: Key Points and Recommendations

The Task Force finds that the Cha-am facilities are generally substandard, negatively impacting the educational experience of WUT students there and the ability to recruit prospective students. In addition, some facilities issues are safety concerns.

Webster University would need to invest in basic facilities work to bring the Cha-am campus to an acceptable standard; this work is tentatively estimated at [REDACTED]. Some of this should be completed immediately while other work may be deferred over a shorter period. There is additional facilities work and upgrading (roughly estimated at an additional [REDACTED]) which could be done to bring the Cha-am campus fully to a condition reflecting an established Webster campus. Such investment would only make sense if Webster University intends to operate the Cha-am campus in the long-term.

- The Task Force recommends that implementations should begin immediately with further inspection by Facilities and the development of a specific plan.
- The Task Force recommends a team comprised of both WUT and Webster University St. Louis senior management be tasked to study whether the Cha-am campus operations should be moved to another location and when that should take place. This recommendation will drive future decision-making for infrastructure support.

Bangkok: The recently renovated Bangkok location is on the fourth floor of the Empire Towers.

- The classrooms are well lit with new furnishings of adequate quality, however the classroom chairs have no ergonomic adjustments.
- None of the rooms have individual thermostatic controls. As a result many of the rooms receive too much air flow which makes them cold and over pressurized.
- Balancing of the airflow through all of the spaces is needed.

Cha-am: The Cha-am campus is expansive and constructed in a more traditional architectural style.

- Main entrance and grounds
 - Most of the grounds keeping efforts are dedicated to the main entrance of the campus.
 - Brush and trash piles surround the campus which include felled trees that have been left in place. Estimated cost is [REDACTED].
 - Main entrance tile work is cracked and sinking in several areas.

- Building proper
 - Visual inspection of the roof reveals many areas where water is gaining entrance to the building. Gutters are overwhelmed and missing in some areas. The building foundation has many areas where it has been eroded by the uncontrolled water flow from the roof. Estimated costs for the roof and gutter repairs combined are [REDACTED].
 - Pests have taken residence in several areas around the buildings.
 - Exterior windows and doors need to be made secure and operational.
 - A complete rekeying of the campus needs to be completed. Estimated cost is [REDACTED].

- Room by room inspections
 - Many of the restrooms have fixtures and toilets that are not operating properly.
 - Inconsistent floor levels between rooms and the entrance walkways exist creating serious trip hazards. Estimated cost to add high visibility paint using in house labor is [REDACTED].
 - Many of the classrooms and offices require furniture, paint and window dressing updates.

- Air conditioning units
 - Many that support the occupied spaces throughout the buildings are of some age. A proactive replacement plan should be initiated to avoid making spaces unusable due to the lack of air conditioning such as the second floor of the Library.
 - Spare air conditioners of some of the more common sizes should be maintained on campus to avoid long inconvenient outages. Estimated costs for inspection and replacement is [REDACTED].

- Peripheral Buildings
 - The supporting buildings on campus suffer from similar issues pointed out for the main building.
 - The derelict building to the west of the main building should be boarded up to restrict access.

- Parking lots and peripheral campus lighting
 - Many of the parking lot drain covers are broken and should be replaced for safe travel by pedestrians and drivers. Estimated cost to replace broken drain covers is [REDACTED].
 - The parking lot needs to be resurfaced and striped.
 - Parking lot lighting is virtually nonexistent due to damage and electrical failure. An entire new lighting scheme should be installed.
 - Campus lighting throughout needs to be reevaluated and replaced with a new layout. Estimated cost is [REDACTED].

Student Housing: Key Points and Recommendations

Housing has been a long term and difficult problem for the Cha-am campus since it opened. No one solution outside of centralized housing owned by WUT will adequately address all the problems.

- Housing Review
 - Consider consolidating housing choices in both Cha-am and Bangkok to centralize students from a safety / resident assistants / ease of administration perspective.
 - There should be transparent communication of housing rates. Students should know the benefits and negatives to obtaining housing through WUT verses contracting independently.

Safety: Key Points and Recommendations

Issues of safety and the policies and processes for handling sexual offenses and other conduct issues arose in several contexts including facilities (related to the safety and comfort of students and employees), student affairs (judicial processes for sexual offense cases involving students; the need for training and staff to deal with sexual offense and counseling issues), communication (the need for communication on the above), and academics (how such issues impact the educational experience). In this summary, key points and recommendations are collected from different sub-groups.

- Communication needs to be enhanced concerning safety related information and internal/external resources both on-campus and off-campus. Students need to be provided with contact numbers and situational safety and health procedures during new student orientation.
- The Resident Assistant program needs to meet Webster University standards, particularly considering the recent growth of undergraduates in Bangkok and the many different off-campus properties used to house students in both Cha-am and Bangkok.
- WUT needs to improve monitoring and incident tracking processes to ensure compliance with the Clery Act.
- WUT must document how campus crime statistics are collected and reported as required by the Clery Act since the judicial practices that provide the data for this report are not in place. Training for the designated sexual offense advocate located in Cha-am should also be a high priority in this area.
- Campus wide education on the topic of sexual misconduct for faculty, staff and students on both the Cha-am and Bangkok campuses, including immediate and extensive training of the WUT campus sexual offense advocate should be planned and initiated. This should extend well beyond the training currently promoted through Webster University Human Resources, with a specific focus on the concept of consent. This should be done in collaboration between WUT and Webster University St. Louis.

- WUT should complete the hiring process for a professional counselor at WUT who can provide mental health counseling services to students primarily at Cha-am and secondarily at Bangkok.
- A plan for the implementation of the above recommendations should be developed immediately with dates assigned for the completion of each task.

Financial Matters: Key Points and Recommendations

Internal Accounting Controls/Financial Reporting to Webster University St. Louis is a strength of WUT, as evidenced by the monthly financial reporting to Webster University St. Louis and the results of the annual external independent audit. Procedures are well regulated and accurate records are maintained. There were no financial improprieties identified. The Financial Matters assessed were: Overall Financial Statements, Billings, Payables, Personnel/Payroll, and Fees.

- Overall Financial Statements and Other Discussions
 - A decision is needed on the sustainability of the Cha-am campus, basically a “stay or go” recommendation. A stay decision may, among other items, begin a discussion about possible collaboration with other Thai institutions such as Silpakorn University, located very close to the Cha-am campus, which has greatly expanded in the past three years.
 - A review of the operating agreement between WUT and Webster University on compliance with the Thai Ministry of Education requirements is necessary.
- Fees Review
 - The WUT fee structure needs further review for reasonableness. Fees at all international campuses should be reviewed.
 - Fees should be transparent, with timely notification and appropriate explanation of the charges.
- Personnel – Payroll Review
 - An HR manager / director with robust experience should be hired [NOTE: Since review, a new HR director joined in March 2015].
 - Employee access to 1.) The Faculty and Teaching Policy Handbook; 2.) WUT Employment Policies and Procedures; 3.) Ministerial Regulations 2006 must be a priority as these are the standards all employees are held to.
 - Administration and administrative resources are divided between Bangkok and Cha-am and resources are stretched thin. English speaking employees are needed in Cha-am to work with students regarding student accounts and billing.
- Billings Review
 - WUT students do not have on-line access to their WUT student accounts and this should be remedied.
 - The billing functions (invoicing, credit memos, payment receipts) are housed in the Peachtree accounting software system whereas the class registration system is housed in the CX system. These two systems do not interface with each other, hence leading to the possibility of missed / inaccurate billings. Solutions should be investigated.

- Business Plan
 - The Task Force strongly recommends that WUT develop a long-term business plan in cooperation with Saint Louis which represents the best interests of Webster University and is supported by leadership in Saint Louis.

Student Affairs and Student Life Services: Key Points and Recommendations

Much of the current state of student life is attributable to a historic lack of focused leadership, and vision for student affairs in WUT, which has created a burden for those serving students there today. While additions to the professional student affairs staff in recent months have had a noticeable and immediate impact on the student life culture in Cha-am, the Student Affairs division at WUT is underdeveloped to such an extent that the notion of “a baseline of services and expectations that advance the University’s mission” is currently out of reach. Student distrust of senior administrative leadership, inadequate communication mechanisms and a lack of processes and accurate information place WUT at risk.

This organizational deficit has resulted in a number of negative impacts on the student life at WUT today, including, but not limited to: inadequate judicial processes and practices (including a lack of a basic understanding of University policy, protocol, and federal legal precepts); a housing and residential life program that is undervalued and under-prioritized; a student leadership culture that is more interested in combat with the administration than it is in collaborating within the campus community; facilities and support services that have gone neglected so long that a majority of students believe that no one cares and nothing will ever change; and a widely held belief among students that numerous student fees are concocted, unregulated, and indicative of an administrative leadership culture at WUT that they see as untrustworthy and exploitive.

In order to establish a baseline of services and expectations that advance the Webster University mission, WUT should focus its attention on the following:

- Immediate implementation of a comprehensive student conduct system that mirrors that which is in place at Webster University St. Louis. This should include re-assigning responsibility for all student conduct/judicial affairs to Student Affairs, installation of an administrative hearing process, immediate and extensive training of the WUT campus sexual offense advocate, training for faculty on managing classroom disruptions (including implementation of a Dean’s review process), and transfer of oversight of the WUT Disciplinary Board/Committee to the WUT Director of Student Affairs.
- WUT must document how campus crime statistics are collected and reported as required by the Clery Act since the full complement of judicial practices that provide the data for this report is not in place. Training for the designated sexual offense advocate located in Cha-am should also be a high priority in this area.
- Complete the hiring process for a professional counselor at WUT who can provide mental health counseling services to students primarily at Cha-am and secondarily at Bangkok.

- Campus wide education on the topic of sexual offenses for faculty, staff and students on both the Cha-am and Bangkok campuses, including immediate and extensive training of the WUT campus sexual offense advocate. This should extend well beyond the training currently promoted through Webster University Human Resources, with a specific focus on the concept of consent. This should be done in collaboration with St. Louis.
- Increase the emphasis and support for student housing. WUT should return Resident Assistant (RA) staff to previous compensation and staffing levels and implement RAs in Bangkok. A review of the current practice of expecting RA staff to attend to the needs of all WUT students living where WUT has students under contract is necessary. WUT should revamp training for RA staff.
- Work closely with Webster University St. Louis (with necessary guidance from Webster University Geneva, Vienna and Leiden) to implement Webster LEADS, the Webster University undergraduate leadership certificate program, at WUT.
- The WUT Leadership team should greatly enhance the communication mechanisms with students. This should include regular formal opportunities to discuss and clarify issues, robust efforts to inform students about student fees (what they are for, where they go), discussion about plans for facility and service improvement that directly impact the student experience, and involvement in the development of a vision for student affairs/student life for WUT.
- Provide training by Saint Louis for any WUT staff who need to catch up with Webster University policies and practices.
- Continue the effort to unite the coordination of all current student affairs staff and student life programs and services at Cha-am and Bangkok under the management and direction of the Director of Student Affairs.
- A plan for the implementation of the above recommendations should be developed with dates assigned for the completion of each task.

Longer term, WUT should align all student life areas in Cha-am and Bangkok – housing, judicial affairs, orientation, educational and social programming, transportation, student leadership development, student government, counseling services, health services, career services, dining, study abroad, orientation – within one division led by the Director of Student Affairs, and resource it accordingly. This alignment should occur with appropriate staffing considerations – not merely shifted for the convenience of coordination or organizational chart clarity.

Student Recruitment, Academic Support and Other Student Services: Key Points and Recommendations

Recruitment, Marketing and Admissions is a strength at WUT. Prospective student channels for recruitment are detailed and the flow of inquiry from application to admissions is clear.

The Enrollment Management leader understands the market(s) and the WUT position within those markets. Registration, course scheduling, and non-major advising are well-run and students are satisfied with these services. Providing visas and student identity cards is an area that received high praise. Students say this process is incredibly easy and that immigration details are covered well during new student orientation. Students report that the turnaround time for ID card production has vastly improved. A more global recruitment strategy (across all international campuses) should be explored for the potential of helping enrollment at all campuses. Recruitment for some programs is hampered by facilities (e.g., the Cha-am campus is not attractive to some students) and/or lack of equipment (e.g., the Bangkok campus does not have sufficient technical equipment, making recruitment for Animation and Computer Science extremely difficult).

- Academic Support
 - A writing center addressing English as a Second Language (ESL) concerns and other tutoring should be created.
- Other Student Services
 - There are delays in processing of transfer credits and articulation agreements, which should be explored and rectified.
 - Students are greatly frustrated by services related to student accounts. This problem should be addressed.
 - Students report a lack of clarity on accounts, financial holds, receipts, and invoices which will require adjustments in official forms and information.
 - In Cha-am, students have difficulty finding a staff member with whom they can communicate questions in English regarding their accounts.
 - Students are frustrated with fees – the amount, the changes in amounts, and their imposition. The fee structure must be clarified.
 - Wi-Fi is often not available because the network shuts down when many users are connected. Wi-Fi is an extremely high priority as internet connectedness is necessary for academic programs.
 - Students are concerned about the library facility in particular the quality of books, lack of current editions of textbooks and enough books to use as study aids. A full time librarian should be hired.
 - Faculty should provide materials for class and provide textbooks for students in the library.

Academics and Accreditation: Key Points and Recommendations

Several aspects of academics and accreditation were reviewed by the Task Force, including the viability of current and potential programs in Bangkok and Cha-am, overall academic quality,

faculty involvement and communication, resources provided for faculty and students, and the accreditation processes. Some of the issues raised directly impact student learning and hence should be addressed immediately, while other recommendations should be considered as longer-term opportunities for improvement.

Programs

The Task Force reviewed enrollment data from the student data management system (CX) for all new students, headcounts, and graduated students for programs at the Bangkok and Cha-am campuses from FY2006-07 through FY2013-14. Overall, the number of new students has increased since FY2006-07, with the largest single-year increase in FY2011-12.

- The MA in Media Communications in Bangkok is small and shrinking. Its viability should be reviewed.
- Undergraduate programs in Bangkok do not have the necessary physical or human resources to meet reasonable Webster standards. A plan should be established and communicated to improve these resources. Alternatively, the decision to offer undergraduate programs in Bangkok should be revisited.
- In Cha-am, the BA in International Relations is shrinking, BA in Psychology is growing, BA in Management and BS in Business Administration are relatively stable, BA in Media Communications is small but stable, and BA in Advertising is very small and growing slightly.
- The media programs in Cha-am do not have adequate storage space for equipment. For the continued success of the media programs, storage space should be provided.

Academic Quality

The overall findings of the Task Force were that the academic quality meets Webster University standards, with some specific recommendations for improvements related to enhancing the learning experiences of students. In particular, the Task Force recommends the following areas of improvement:

- Wi-fi access on the Cha-am campus is not often available. Having such access should be a high priority as lack of access negatively impacts student learning. This situation should be rectified.
- The WUT website offers the possibility of internships, but there does not appear to be sufficient support to facilitate such opportunities for the students. The appointment of an individual responsible for facilitating student internships, acting as an ‘internship coordinator’, is recommended to ensure that students receive this important, career-enhancing benefit.

- WUT is a highly valued member of the Webster network. As with any campus location, being part of such a network involves certain responsibilities in terms of compliance with the overall requirements of the institution. There is currently low compliance for syllabi submissions for the business school and low participation in online course evaluations. It is recommended that immediate steps be taken to improve communication between WUT and the appropriate personnel in St. Louis to ensure greater compliance moving forward. Such an improvement will serve to enhance faculty collaboration, and improve the overall academic quality of programs throughout the institution. Ensuring consistent records of academic program syllabi, across all Webster campus locations, as well as a uniform method to effectively and efficiently gather course evaluations, greatly enhances quality assurance for the institution as a whole. This is a system responsibility.
- Faculty and students expressed a desire for a Writing Center, or other support for writing. Providing such support would enhance the learning experience of many students at WUT, regardless of their particular degree program. It is recommended that a Writing Center be established.

Strategic Direction

The market analysis process for determining which new programs should be offered at any Webster University location is unclear. The market analysis for any new program should be formalized. The Task Force recommends a consistent *pro forma* process that includes adequate evidence of market demand, consultation with the department expected to offer the program, evidence that adequate facilities exist to support student services, and evidence that adequate faculty resources exist to support the program and meet accreditation demands. Faculty input into such decisions is absolutely necessary wherever such faculty expertise can be located in the Webster University system. The Task Force recommends that this process be implemented for any new program at Webster University.

Faculty

WUT has faculty who are invested in the academic success of their students and of WUT as a whole, but the inconsistency with which faculty policies and procedures are communicated or implemented has created an environment of ambiguous expectations for faculty performance. The following areas deserve attention and should be addressed.

- The recruitment, vetting, orientation, grievance, evaluation, and termination processes for faculty is unclear and inconsistently applied. Procedures for each task should be formally established.
 - Recruitment: Faculty positions should be advertised in the appropriate local source, as well as an appropriate academic source, such as the Chronicle of Higher Education.
 - Vetting: Evaluation of prospective faculty credentials should be conducted by the department to ensure adequate content expertise and academic qualifications. A background check should be conducted by Human Resources.

- Orientation, Grievance, Evaluation, and Termination: A standard process to orient faculty to their performance expectations should be implemented. This process should include a review of the grievance, orientation, and termination process listed in the WUT Faculty Handbook.
- WUT has produced a Faculty Handbook, but many faculty stated they were not aware of the handbook. The Faculty Handbook should be provided to current faculty and during orientation for new faculty. The manual should be posted in an accessible physical and electronic location.
 - The faculty evaluation process, as stated in the Faculty Handbook, does not appear to be followed consistently. It is not clear how conflicts in recommendation and contract renewal are resolved. This should be clarified, followed consistently, and communicated to faculty.
 - The termination policy and process listed in the handbook identifies several steps, including 1) verbal warning, 2) written warning/probationary status, and 3) termination. This process should be followed.
 - The WUT Faculty Handbook should be reviewed to ensure it is aligned with the Webster University St. Louis University Handbook. This process may take time. The Task Force recommends this process take place during the 2015-2016 academic year.
- Faculty are not all aware of the WUT policy for research funding and are unclear if it is being consistently followed. Effective communication of this policy is necessary.
- Faculty need to be made aware of approved journals for research by consulting the Quality Assurance (QA) contact. The QA contact should be clearly communicated.
- The WUT website does not provide adequate and consistent information about faculty and their qualifications. The Task Force recommends revising the website such that accurate and current information on the faculty is listed.
- The lack of a dedicated human resources officer makes clarifying faculty contract questions confusing.
- WUT does not have a Faculty Senate or other body to represent faculty concerns. Some form of faculty representation needs to be established.
- Representation of faculty on significant university committees was not consistent. Faculty need to be involved in decision-making that affects teaching and academic programs.

Library

Providing adequate library resources is an essential component of a higher education experience. The Task Force has made specific recommendations for improvement to ensure a high quality learning experience for students.

- There has been no librarian for the past two years. This is a critical position and needs to be filled as soon as possible.
- The range of books in the Cha-am campus library is not sufficient for the needs of the students. The library at the Bangkok facility is inadequate to support undergraduate programs. The Task Force recommends that immediate consideration be given to establishing mechanisms to share resources between the two facilities, providing students with a greater range of reference material.
- Providing students with access to a wide variety of textbooks is vital. The Task Force recommends that during the 2015-16 academic year consideration be given to establishing a “used book” section in the Cha-am library to allow students to purchase or borrow texts.

Institutional Collaboration

Communication between Webster University St. Louis and WUT is inconsistent and depends largely on the dedication of particular staff or faculty in both locations to establish and maintain healthy dialogue. Clear channels of communication need to be established and followed consistently. The Task Force recommends that Webster University St. Louis and WUT collaborate to identify appropriate contacts within each academic and administrative department and to establish regular communication of both routine and unexpected issues. The Task Force recommends that the Campus Director and/or the Academic Director participate in the monthly Deans’ Global Council videoconference.

Accreditation

WUT must satisfy Thai accreditation in addition to meeting the Webster requirements imposed by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), as well as any specialized accreditors. The Task Force recognizes the recently increasing accreditation score, placing WUT among the country’s elite institutions. Quality Assurance reports are published on a regular basis, both for internal and external use. Some apparently conflicting details appear in these reports, as well as on the WUT website, which the Task Force recommends be clarified and rectified.

- Full-time and part-time faculty are listed in the Quality Assurance reports, as well as internal reports, and on the WUT website. There were many inconsistencies in this information. The Task Force recommends that these details should be investigated, and any inconsistencies rectified to comply with accreditation.

- Thai accreditation requires five full-time, research-active faculty for each program offered. The academic leadership of WUT and St. Louis must discuss how WUT can meet this requirement, including clarifying specifics of the requirement, exploring how faculty in the Webster network can be leveraged, and determining the number of academic programs that should be offered in Thailand in light of this requirement. Maintaining both HLC and Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) accreditation standards is a shared challenge and responsibility of WUT and St. Louis leadership. Challenges to the requirements should be discussed and identified.
- In the Quality Assurance reports, faculty publications are sometimes listed in two consecutive years. Clarification is requested to determine if this is consistent with best practices and Thai MOE administrative guidelines. The Task Force recommends that this clarification be provided to comply with accreditation.
- Faculty hire dates listed in Quality Assurance reports do not always appear to reflect accurate hire dates. Such inaccuracies should be reviewed and corrected immediately.
- The Task Force understands that WUT previously had a staff person whose responsibilities included “Quality Assurance” and that this responsibility included collection and management of data and materials required for Thai accreditation. The Task Force finds that this is an essential position in WUT and should be renewed and expanded to include communication with the Office of Academic Affairs in St. Louis regarding the needs and requirements of WUT’s Thai accreditation.

WUT Website

As a member of the Webster campus network, WUT’s website academic content should be consistent with that of the Webster University system. The Task Force identified some inconsistencies and recommends that the details are clarified as quickly as possible.

- The distinction between “department” and “school/college” should be clarified and made consistent with Webster University practice.
- All full-time faculty should be listed on the WUT website.
- For many programs, “objectives” are listed in addition to “outcomes”. The distinction between the two is not clear and should be clarified.

The recommendations from the Task Force in relation to academics and accreditation are aimed at supporting and increasing student learning, and solidifying the important role of WUT within the Webster network. The enhanced communication recommended, both within WUT and between WUT and St. Louis, will be beneficial to all parties in our goal of strengthening the institution as a whole.

Communications: Key Points and Recommendations

The focus of this review is on internal communications only, including formal and informal communication, written print or email messages, and face-to-face communication. The Task Force looked at top-down communication, peer-to-peer feedback, and communication between WUT and Saint Louis.

- **Leadership (Top Down) Communications Observations**
 - In general, the communication system used by WUT is on an “as-needed” basis.
 - The Rector, in consultation with key staff, sets the vision and strategy for the organization at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters, via all faculty and staff meetings, and disseminates information through the hierarchy of the organizational chart.
 - Meetings take place at the Executive, Leadership, Unit and Academic Heads level, however, it is unclear if these are routine or ad hoc.
 - The Academic Director communicates with Faculty and Staff primarily through emails and Heads of Department meetings.
 - There exists a lack of direct communication to students as well as rank and file staff or faculty.

- **Communications with St. Louis Observations**
 - WUT Leadership asked for clarification from St. Louis as to what was expected of them.
 - WUT Leadership does not find that communication from St. Louis is clear.
 - WUT Leadership is not sure whom to consult with in Saint Louis on a wide variety of issues.

- **Other General Communications Observations**
 - While there are extensive communication channels utilized at WUT, there is a lack of consistency in messages and delivery. Individual or group perception of the communications and formal communications structures/tactics is quite negative.
 - There exists a lack of consistency in communications between Saint Louis and WUT.
 - WUT academic matters are communicated from the academic faculty advisor to student.
 - There is a lack consistency in the manner WUT non-academic matters are communicated among administration, staff and students.
 - There is a lack of clarity for students, rank and file staff and faculty as to how they should bring matters up to the WUT leadership.

- **Recommendations**

- Develop a regular, consistent communication strategy including multiple communication channels such as scheduled and publicized face-to-face meetings, online chat and small group sessions and/or video recordings.
- Remove unwelcome signage at the campuses (i.e. the harsh “students not allowed” signs on some of the Bangkok campus doors) - a more open and inviting area would soften the edge between students and administration.
- Establish routine communication with students and have a visible presence in both Cha-am and Bangkok.
- Undergraduate students, particularly new students, need more support in Bangkok.
- St. Louis should be a more active participant in the communication network with all the international campuses.
- Written policies such as student handbooks, faculty handbooks, and employee handbooks (and other WUT written policies) should be made available with current copies put in accessible areas (both on the internet and at both WUT locations).

In conclusion, WUT is a major asset to the Webster University network, which provides skills and experiences to transform students for global citizenship and individual excellence. By committing to implement the recommendations outlined in this report, WUT and Webster University can resolve these significant concerns and contribute to Webster’s strategic plan to develop a Network of Academic and Operational Excellence.

The Task Force for Webster-Thailand was appointed and charged to complete the review and submit a report to the Provost in Spring 2015.

Task Force co-chairs:

- Nancy Hellerud, Vice Provost
- Joseph Stimpfl, Professor, Department of Religious Studies, College of Arts & Sciences
- Grant Chapman, Associate Vice President and Director of International Programs

Other members of the team:

- John Buck, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Housing & Residential Life
- Greg Gunderson, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
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- Gil Morales, Manager, Facilities Operations
- Craig Mundle, Director, Internal Audit