

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall, 2008.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Continuation of Franklin Pierce College's accreditation is based upon the Commission's finding that its standards are being substantially met by the College. The Commission applauds the College for preparing a candid, thorough, and realistic self-study. We also take special cognizance of the President and Board for having achieved remarkable progress towards achieving financial stability in a short amount of time. We note favorably that the College is exiting a period of severe financial stress and closed FY 1997 and 1998 with modest surpluses. In addition, we take note that the institution has made dramatic improvement in student retention in the last several years. Further we recognize the institution's efforts to assess student outcomes and its efforts to integrate the co-curriculum with academic programming resulting from a coherent, educationally purposeful vision of student affairs and a vital partnership with academic affairs. Loyalty and commitment on the part of the undergraduate faculty has created an environment on campus that contributes to the value and attractiveness of the educational program. In addition, we note that the MBA program is providing a needed academic experience for a particular population in the various locations. We otherwise find that this graduate program fulfills the relevant *Standards for Accreditation*, hence our action to include it in the institution's accreditation.

Commission policy requires a fifth-year report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the policy on Periodic Review. The areas identified for the Fall, 2003 report are related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation*, *Organization and Governance*, *Programs and Instruction*, *Faculty*, and *Financial Resources*.

The Commission commends the College for the significant progress it has made, especially over the last three years, in its planning efforts. Specifically, a strategic plan has been developed which has included input from major divisions of the College and has been the signal to all areas of the College to initiate systematic, broad-based, interrelated planning. As part of that planning, many evaluations have been undertaken to determine the welfare of the institution's constituencies, fiscal needs, health status of its citizens, facilities adequacy and usage patterns, programmatic relevance, as well as employee, student and alumni satisfaction. Planning has every indication of developing further given support from a grant from the Teague Foundation and establishment of the 16-member Pierce Council, a group charged with the responsibility of addressing college-wide issues, including communications. For example, recently a representative team comprised of the College's senior staff and members of the Pierce Council met to update the College's strategic goals and to integrate fully the projections found in the self-study as well as the concerns and recommendations detailed in the team's evaluation report. Through the institution's interim Fall, 2003 report, the Commission wishes to learn of further progress the College has made in continuing to develop and implement its strategic plan, a matter directly related to our standard on *Planning and Evaluation* (2.1-2.3).

Over recent years the College has experienced significant growth in off-campus sites, continuing education, and graduate education. While the lines of authority and responsibility are clear in governance, lines of communication seem to be in a process of development. Specifically, for example, we note that one of the charges to the recently established Pierce Council is to address the college-wide issue of communications and that one goal of the committee is to expand college-wide participation in planning and decision-making. Through the College's interim report the Commission wishes to become apprised of progress the institution has made to assure that "The institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them" (*Organization and Governance*, 3.2) and that "Off-campus, continuing education, evening and weekend programs are clearly integrated and incorporated into the governance system of the institution" (3.6).