

## **ESSAY STANDARD 2**

### **Achieving Educational Objectives Through Core Functions**

CETYS University, a multi-campus private non-profit university system located in three major cities in Baja California, is fully recognized by FIMPES the only Mexican accreditation agency for private institutions. The University also has achieved accreditation of its academic programs by recognized national specialized accrediting agencies. With degrees at both undergraduate and graduate levels in the fields of Engineering, Business Administration and Humanities and Social Sciences, our mission is the development of individuals with strong humanistic values and a solid professional foundation, to contribute to the economic, cultural and social improvement of our community. This is reflected in our Educational Model and Core Values.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

##### **CFR 2.1**

**The institution's educational programs are appropriate in content, standards and nomenclature for the degree level awarded.**

Since 2000, CETYS University has undergone accreditation reviews of academic programs; these reviews have evaluated whether or not undergraduate degree programs on the three campuses have the appropriate content, structure, and necessary resources to provide quality educational degrees. The accreditations obtained confirm that in general, undergraduate programs do have the necessary features to operate, and that their academic content and design meet the appropriate expectations and standards of the different professional areas involved (1).

The institution is fully committed to recruiting and maintaining a core faculty with the professional qualifications to ensure the complete development and delivery of its educational model - and which is capable of helping develop the levels of student learning and achievement required for graduation.

For undergraduate programs, the University establishes institutional policies regarding the number of full-time and adjunct faculty. These policies are reviewed regularly and meet the standards required by national (Mexican) accrediting agencies (CACEI, CACECA, CNEIP, etc.). For undergraduate programs, the educational model calls for degree programs to be supported by core faculty and a group of fairly permanent adjunct instructors.

For graduate programs, the Graduate College is the institutional academic unit which designs, implements, operates, and evaluates such programs, under its own model, independently from that of undergraduate programs.

The graduate educational model has a professional performance and training focus, meaning that emphasis is placed on application and professional practice, rather than on

the creation and training of students for basic research careers. In each course, the professor seeks to help the student link the course's academic content with his/her practical professional reality, while helping the student to build and apply knowledge centered on the subject of the course. Our educational model is based on the concept that students should preferably be employed, and thus whose educational program would directly relate to their professional environment. Likewise, the graduate educational model is also based on the notion that faculty must be individuals with extensive professional experience in the subject of the courses they teach. Additionally, the faculty must be knowledgeable of pedagogical principles and instructional methodology in order to serve as both a facilitator/advisor and professor to the student.

All graduate programs possess a dual framework or mixed modality; this implies that each course has two major learning activities:

1. Learning activities under the direct guidance of a faculty member on a CETYS University campus or other appropriate location; and
2. Independent student learning activities that are directly related to the course and which are performed either onsite or off campus.

Generally, 36 hours of academic work, combining both types of learning activities, are required for earning one academic credit. Graduate courses are mostly six credits, which therefore require 96 hours of academic work through both learning activities (29).

In the Master programs, 100% of the faculty holds at least a Master-level degree, and all are experts in their respective teaching areas. Additionally, 25% of each trimester's classes in the Master's program are taught by faculty holding a Ph.D., while for doctoral programs, 100% of the courses are taught by faculty with a Ph.D. The faculty in graduate programs is composed of both external experts and core undergraduate professors who meet the Graduate College's academic

qualifications, as the institution seeks to have a good mix of faculty with extensive professional experience and faculty with an academic track record at universities and national and international institutes.

As noted above, 100% of the faculty teaching in doctoral programs holds a Ph.D. degree and all are experts in their subject areas, with extensive research experience and publications, nationally and internationally. The external professors come from other educational institutions and national or international research centers of renowned prestige. Additional and more specific and detailed information is available in documentation regarding CETYS' Graduate Model.

## **CFR 2.2**

**All degrees –undergraduate and graduate—awarded by the institution are clearly defined in terms of entry-level requirements and in terms of levels of student achievement.**

The institution's educational model focuses on the student's complete development and education through the daily application of pedagogical principles and specific values described in the Educational Model (59) for Each Undergraduate Academic Program, Section 2. To ensure the implementation of these principles and values, each undergraduate and graduate program's General Profile and Specific Graduating Profile, describes the knowledge, capabilities, skills and aptitudes that each program's graduating student must achieve. Both the general as well as the specific profile for each program of study detail and enunciate specific and concrete learning outcomes through courses constituting the educational foundation of each degree program (2). For undergraduate academic programs, basic, general and professional education axes describe in each course the learning outcomes that students must achieve in order to satisfy graduation requirements defined by their program..

At the course level, through course programs, learning outcomes translate into learning activities and experiences, designed by the faculty and which the students perform under faculty guidance or independently. These learning activities generate learning outcomes that serve as evidence of the level of competence acquired by students as described in the general and specific requirements of their respective program.

The University's general education requirements for undergraduate programs seek for its undergraduates to develop effective oral and writing communication skills in both Spanish and English, to effectively use information technologies, to develop mathematical abilities, to comprehend and utilize language, and to understand the logic and foundations of the basic sciences for effective learning in their respective fields of study. These requirements allow students to acquire breadth of knowledge, an understanding of globalization and its impacts, of sustainable development, as well as of ethical problems that are likely to arise in their respective lives and future professions. Following this rationale, CETYS implements what it interprets, in our context, as a General Education program, with an emphasis on promoting holistic education. As evidenced in the General Education Appendix (3), each undergraduate program has an adequate number of courses that translate into more than 45 credits-hours (Agreement 279) (28) which make a CETYS education into a solid foundational education, and not one merely limited to professional training. Additionally, it is important to clarify that in Mexico undergraduate programs do not use the concept of a "*Major*"; instead, they make use of a professional development framework with required courses needed to meet graduation requirements for each specialized program. Course program documentation on University General Requirements and Requirements for Specialized Fields of Study explain this further.

The educational model for graduate programs has a professional performance focus (27) and satisfies official entry and licensure requirements. Each Master's and Ph.D. program focuses on application and professional performance and is directed, preferably, at students already working. Their academic programs reflect a structure requiring students to perform activities in and outside the classroom to obtain credits and meet academic degree requirements; for the Ph.D. program, emphasis is placed on the development of knowledge and skills associated with conducting applied research.

Graduate academic programs are offered in four main areas: Business Administration, Engineering, the Social Sciences and Education. Graduate programs within an academic area are designed to include a series of general courses and a series of specialized courses. A full-time Academic Coordinator manages the program; he/she is supported in the management of specialized areas by a group of full-time faculty. The *Graduate Degree Development Plan 2015*, prepared in

2006, sets academic and operational strategies that graduate degree programs will follow during the next nine years.

The Office of Curricular Development, the Managing Educational Office and each College's Dean's Office are the units responsible for the joint design and evaluation of the functioning of academic plans and degree programs. Implementation and operation of academic plans and degree programs are in the hands of Academic Directors and Deans of Schools, who through their schools and faculty, implement and operate these plans and programs, while also generating feedback for their improvement.

### **CFR 2.3**

#### **The institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are clearly reflected in its academic programs and policies.**

To achieve graduation requirements at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the institution designs and applies, based on the programs, a series of academic rules and policies (5), in addition to standardized course programs that guide and determine the education provided in and outside the classroom (1).

Institutional policies and regulations, as well as guides for academic degree programs allow for decision-making in terms of admissions and graduation, enhancement of library collections, laboratories, equipment and installations, and the updating of course programs, student follow-up and eventually for program improvement.

Based on the four Institutional Core Values of Continued Improvement, Internationalization, Entrepreneurial Spirit, and Student Career and Professional Articulation, the institution has established working agreements with various organizations in its surrounding communities, which allow it to structure co-curricular activities so that students may engage in professional internships, social and community service, as well as entrepreneurial projects, applied and field research, cultural and athletic activities, etc. Similarly, the institution has established exchange agreements with over 50 educational institutions in both Mexico and abroad, thus allowing for its students to acquire a broader understanding and global vision and to develop awareness of, and open mindedness to other cultures and languages, particularly to the United States and the English language (7-14 & 59).

#### CFR 2.4

### **The institution's expectations for learning and student attainment are developed and widely shared among its members.**

Institutional expectations adhere to the University's mission (57) and educational model (59) approved by IENAC's board, supported by the President, faculty, and staff, and widely shared by all members of CETYS University. Specifically, learning expectations are reflected in graduation requirements set forth in academic programs as well as programs for each course (2), which are designed and developed by the institution's academic body and are clearly communicated to the students.

To ensure that students reach established levels of achievement for undergraduate programs, CETYS University stipulates, through Article 14 of *Student Rules and Regulations for Undergraduate Programs* (5), that evaluation must be a permanent process assessing competencies (knowledge and skills) and formative aspects (through the exercise of values and attitudes), which means that the professor must propose and establish the criteria and mechanisms for evaluation, so long as they are consistent with normative evaluation criteria. This requires review and approval and there is written communication so that the final evaluation reflects the most relevant learning outcomes of the course. Similarly, graduate programs have their own respective rules regarding criteria and mechanisms for evaluation, specifically, through Article 13 of *Student Rules and Regulations for Graduate Programs*.

In the interest of improvement, the University regularly reviews its curriculum for both undergraduate and graduate programs, and this is done with the support of its faculty and administrators (e.g., coordinators and deans) responsible for academic programs.

For undergraduate programs, a group of faculty members has adopted the role of curricular development managers (CDM's) and Subject Matter Experts (SME) with the purpose of reviewing and redesigning (as necessary) all courses in the degree programs created since 2004 (96) Academics participating in this review and redesign process are collectively responsible for specifying needed resources, such as library materials, software, hardware and all other resources necessary for students to achieve stated learning outcomes in the given courses of a particular program.

For graduate programs, curricular structuring is also underway through a group of academic experts in the corresponding discipline and in curricular design, who also take into account the needs raised by surveyed and interviewed employers regarding their vision of requirements for our graduate students and the requisites to meet for graduation. With these needs in mind, official programs are designed for each course. Faculty assigned to each course individually tailor official course programs, updating adequate content based on their knowledge and experience, and adding relevant learning activities to attain appropriate standards of achievement for passing courses and making progress toward graduation (17).

Academic programs are established at both the undergraduate and graduate levels through a confirmed analysis of professional needs and requirements in the region, leading the University to offer degree programs responsive to these needs. Additionally, the institution links its programs, curriculum, and services to its community through professional internships and social service (15). These last two activities form part of the University's core values of social and professional engagement and articulation with the community.

Finally, the institution maintains an ongoing relationship with external organizations and stakeholders in order to constantly remain current in areas relevant to graduation requirements for its programs. These relationships and activities are of a systematic nature through liaisons with businesses, government organizations and non-governmental associations, and/or with the specific purpose of gathering feedback about alumni performance that may lead to updating program and graduation requirements for undergraduate and graduate programs (16, 18).

### **CFR 2.5**

#### **The institution's academic programs actively involve students in learning and challenge them to achieve high expectations.**

Curricular activities are indicated in Course Programs (2), and are systematically designed for learning and as a challenge for students to meet high expectations. The University's environment promotes co-curricular activities through alternative programs directed by faculty, advisors, and tutorial counselors (7).

Students have the opportunity to assume new challenges and acquire new knowledge through the institution's four pedagogical principles of Learning to Learn, Learning Abilities and Skills, Learning to Co-exist, and Learning to Be, as well as through the Education Model's Core Values of Continued Improvement, Internationalization, an Entrepreneurial Attitude, and Professional Engagement (19). Education at CETYS is not about memorization, students are required to analyze, reflect, re-conceptualize, synthesize and apply knowledge to specific projects in their courses and to projects of personal and/or professional interest. This is reflected through course learning outcomes and activities (21). Additionally, the core values of internationalization, social and professional engagement with the community and an entrepreneurial attitude give students the opportunity to expand their interests and provide challenges for academic exchange, double-degree programs, community work, professional internships, and new business opportunities. The use of Blackboard software (20) for example, gives students other possibilities, through technology, to gain knowledge and experience learning outcomes independent of simply a classroom-based education; electronic mediums open other possibilities for facilitating and expanding student learning.

Concerning feedback to undergraduate students, in every course of every semester, there are three official evaluation periods: two midterms and a final; grading reports produced during these evaluation periods can be obtained from the Registrar's Office or through the University's respective campus website. These regular grading reports provide

students and parents/guardians with feedback on academic performance. Based on these evaluations, the institution can detect advising and/or tutoring needs and seize the opportunity to work with students needing to improve their performance. Additionally, the Registrar's Office produces final grade bulletins at each semester's completion. Furthermore, the student is continuously assessed during the semester since it is the professor's responsibility to provide pertinent feedback to students regarding their performance; therefore, a series of feedback mechanisms are incorporated into Course Programs that support the instructor in fulfilling this task.

For graduate programs, the academic calendar is divided into ten weeklong trimesters, with evaluation reports submitted at the end of each period. Of course, during each term, and consistent with established procedures, professors evaluate and provide feedback to students regarding their performance in the specific course they are taking.

All official course programs at the graduate level establish evaluation criteria used by the faculty as a base for the design of evaluation activities. The instructor may choose from various forms of student assessment in order to enrich course instruction and maximize learning outcomes (22). Graduate programs require that evaluations be made through the use of various strategies such as examinations, class participation, written assignments, presentation of special projects, etc. We may also add that due to the nature of their design, both undergraduate and graduate course programs promote regular feedback. Furthermore, the educational model requires that the professor provide feedback to the student concerning all projects in which he/she participates.

## **CFR 2.6**

### **The institution demonstrates that its graduates consistently achieve its stated levels of attainment.**

To demonstrate that graduates achieve levels of professional performance outlined in each undergraduate program's graduation requirements, since March 2003, the University has made the General Exit Undergraduate Exam (Examen General de Egreso de la Licenciatura - EGEL<sup>1</sup>) administered by CENEVAL (National Evaluating Center for Higher Education) a degree requisite. Since August 2004, the *Student Handbook for Undergraduate Programs* (5), Article 56 states that this exam is a mandatory condition for graduation (6). As a result, students in their last semester must take this exam, and in the event that CENEVAL does not administer an exam in their given discipline, the University then requires and administers a General Knowledge Exam.

Furthermore, follow-up studies of alumni and continuous contact with local Liaison/Advisory Committees generate additional feedback about our alumni's performance. Nonetheless, the institution recognizes the necessity to create an "exit indicator" determining if graduation achievement levels are met. The design of this "exit indicator" is in process. In terms of planning, our system considers that the outlines for each course be designed with information relating to learning outcomes (2), content,

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<sup>1</sup> See Glossary for a complete listing and definition in English and Spanish of terms cited under this and the other following standards.

classroom learning activities, external learning activities, criteria and tools for evaluation. In terms of evaluation (25), our system considers an evaluation program adhering to established criteria, consistent with learning outcomes, learning activities, the use of tools and techniques for the evaluation of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and feedback given to students regarding learning outcomes and the learning process. All of this implies the need for a mechanism to monitor the standards used by professors in evaluating students' work (23, 24).

For graduate programs, the relevance of course curricular objectives and students' achievement levels upon graduation are measured through direct consultation between the academic coordinator of each program and the companies where graduate students are employed.

### **CFR 2.7.**

**To improve program currency and effectiveness, all programs offered by the institution are subject to review.**

Consistent with the University's Mission (57) and Educational Model (59) that adheres to a philosophy of Continued Improvement, CETYS University constantly undergoes a process of review, improvement and updating of its academic programs. This updating process is headed by IENAC'S Board, supervised by the President's Office and accomplished with the participation of all members of CETYS University, as indicated in the Institutional Statute, Art. 60 (31).

The review and updating process for undergraduate programs operates at three levels:

First, at the level of academic programs (2), regular periodic reviews and revisions occur every four years and include the participation of faculty and surveying employers and alumni to gather information that can serve as input for these reviews.

Second, at the Course Program level (17, 26) a series of evaluation activities aim at ensuring that students passing the course achieved the learning outcomes. The learning process is evaluated through various end of course surveys that assess the course, as well as the consistency between content and methodology proposed in course program documents along with classroom activities performed during the semester (13, 25). Both faculty and students complete this evaluation.

Third, at the student level, by incorporating results from mechanisms such as CENEVAL's EGEL exam, a mandatory requirement of all CETYS students in their last semester (6).

There are other elements particular to CETYS Universidad and pertaining to our Pedagogical Model and Core Values that are not specifically evaluated by EGEL exams. These are evaluated by the professors via the activities defined in the course programs and also by way of our entrepreneurial programs, internship and social service reports, as well as employers' evaluations (15).

Data on admissions and completion rates for each program are maintained and analyzed (DT 1.3 & 3.2), as well as data obtained from entry and exit (32) –EGEL- exams. At the Academic Program level, CETYS University has been submitting its undergraduate programs for accreditation to various accrediting bodies such as the Council for Accreditation of Engineering Instruction (CACEI) and the Council for Accreditation in the Instruction of Accounting and Administration (CACECA) (33).

Similar to undergraduate programs, the review and updating process for graduate academic programs also functions at different levels. The quality of the programs is achieved through continued improvement on the part of Academic Coordinators, centered on four aspects: Faculty, Programs, Academic Resources, and Learning Outcomes.

At the faculty level, the evaluation of academic programs is based on the curriculum and course performance, which are evaluated through a series of surveys completed by students at the end of the course.

At the program level, evaluation is based on periodic reviews where academic bodies, alumni and employers participate under the supervision of the Academic Coordinator (18).

At the academic resources level, evaluation is based on quality and accessibility. At the learning outcomes level, evaluation is based on an analysis performed every six months, which seeks to determine if learning curricular objectives are achieved by students and to what degree.

## **SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY**

### **CFR 2.8**

#### **The institution actively values and promotes scholarship.**

The Institutional Mission (57) establishes that CETYS University justifies its purpose by the achievement of excellence through three core functions: teaching, research and the dissemination of culture (service and outreach).

The *General Statute* (31) indicates in Art. 89 and 90, that professional development is the responsibility of the faculty, and as a result, faculty will therefore receive the institution's support under the framework of the Integral Improvement Program for Academic Personnel. In particular, SERP is a mechanism, which considers criteria for promotion and merit among the faculty.

The *General Statute* defines Academic Personnel categories, as well as policies pertaining to academic workload assignment so that the duties and responsibilities defined for each category may be performed and assessed.

As an academic project, Academic Reform involves faculty in curricular review and design projects and promotes curricular innovation in all its facets, from course design to classroom delivery/implementation (34).

The *Master Research Plan* (35) is vested with an integrated review system, and clearly indicates research frameworks consistent with the University's Mission.

Student involvement in faculty research and development projects is encouraged (11), and rewarded in the forms of financial grants, internship hours and social service (10, 15).

The CETYS Editorial Project encourages creativity in the form of academic texts and articles prepared by the University's undergraduate and graduate faculty for publication internally as well as externally (22).

Excellence in academic performance is encouraged at the graduate level through the Doctoral Dissertation courses. The student learns to conduct research through a combination of four fundamental aspects: knowledge of the topic of the research project, an understanding of the philosophical, strategic and methodological aspects of the research process, group work to accelerate individual learning and contribute to others' projects, and the practical application of these aspects in completing an individual doctoral dissertation. In addition to the research initiatives in the doctoral program, we also encourage research through Thesis Projects in the Masters programs in Education and the Environment.

### **CFR 2.9**

#### **The institution recognizes and promotes appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning and service.**

CETYS University realizes that a significant factor in attracting and retaining high achieving students is a professional, first-rate, and dedicated professoriate, along with exceptional service and administrative personnel. The institution's educational model, centered on scholarship, also reflects core values (continued improvement, internationalization, social and professional engagement with the community and an entrepreneurial attitude) that require structures and processes to help students achieve desired objectives.

For students who, notwithstanding their academic merits and talents, face economic hardships, the University grants a series of scholarships and other forms of financial aid that allow them to meet the cost of education at our institution. Additionally, the institution provides a series of support services that allow students to meet the academic demands of their respective academic programs through social service, professional internships, pursuit of degrees, tutoring, the "Empreser and Impulsa" programs, international experiences, and English language studies.

To promote the entrepreneurial component of the educational model, the Emprededor Program, open to students and alumni, includes IMPULSA (offering educational programs that encourage the development of an entrepreneurial spirit), and EMPRESER, a body that operates through public and private funds and provides assessment and training to entrepreneurs wishing to start a new business with a competitive vision, thus encouraging the creation of new businesses. Assessment provided by EMPRESER is available to both CETYS students and alumni.

The University confers various academic awards (honorary mentions, academic merits, honor medals, honor roll, etc.) to encourage and reward students for high scholarly and co-curricular performance. In addition to these internal efforts, the institution expects that its students participate in external or community events through which they will face other academic and professional challenges that enhance both their personal development and formal education.

Outstanding creativity and performance among the faculty is encouraged through the Integral Improvement Program for Academic Personnel. Additionally, institutional policies encourage the participation of full-time and adjunct faculty in these types of programs. Furthermore, performance evaluation systems for faculty, at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, seek to gear professors towards continued improvement of their instruction, as well as to acknowledge the quality of their performance by impacting their salary adjustments and/or promoting their retention and tenure within the institution.

At the undergraduate level, skills acquired by faculty in professional development programs are incorporated into standardized course programs, through curricular review and design performed as part of the Academic Reform. Creative and innovative pedagogical and didactic practices are thus incorporated into the educational model. Another way of supporting innovation and creativity is through the use of academies, particularly in basic areas of undergraduate programs of study.

In graduate programs, students must design an Applied Project, where they demonstrate their capacity to apply the content knowledge and skills acquired through their studies; additionally, dissertations and theses are prepared at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The institution has created a *Master Research Plan*, a *Research Handbook* and a Publishing House, which jointly seek to encourage and manage faculty research and publication projects. Currently, faculty research and publication is managed and monitored by School Deans, given that productivity matrices include publication requirements that must be met by the faculty within each School. At the undergraduate level, student research has been encouraged through a mandatory course on Research Methodology. Furthermore, since degree options include the preparation of a thesis or a research project (mini-thesis), we may consider that these represent two additional ways of formally encouraging student research.

## **SUPPORT FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

### **CFR 2.10**

**The institution regularly identifies the characteristics of its students and assesses their needs, experiences, and levels of satisfaction.**

At CETYS University satisfaction levels of its relevant audiences, particularly students, is a matter of strategic concern and is reflected as one of the 12 strategic objectives of the institution's *2010 Plan*.

CETYS University administers to students at all levels a satisfaction survey each semester; the data gathered allows the University to identify areas in its educational programs and services that may need improvement. Detected opportunities for improvement are turned into review and enhancement projects within the Value Chain and "a lean and agile university" under the administrative control of each campus, in order to meet established satisfaction goals among the students. Additional sources of information used to measure satisfaction levels among undergraduate and graduate students are faculty evaluation systems and Focus Groups organized by the Department of Development and Educational Support.

Of course, students' satisfaction also depends on their academic performance and on how this performance is evaluated by the faculty. Both the *Handbook for Undergraduate Programs* and *Handbook for Graduate Programs*, establish in their respective chapters on educational evaluation, the guidelines that faculty must follow to set and apply appropriate and fair evaluation criteria in their courses. Additionally, grading policies, academic personnel, deadlines and procedures available to students to appeal a grade in the event of dissatisfaction or deviation from evaluation criteria agreed to by the instructor are also explained in this document. Specifically, Art. 29 of the *Handbook for Undergraduate Programs* and Art. 17 of the *Handbook for Graduate Programs*, indicate to the student the procedure to follow when he/she disagrees with the results obtained from a partial or final evaluation.

In the past, grading policies for undergraduate courses at Sistema CETYS ranged from 5, indicating course failure, to 7, 8, 9, and 10 indicating a passing grade. However, since 2002 and at the request of the faculty, the current grading scale of 0 to 100, where scores from 70 upwards are considered passing grades, replaced this grading policy. This new scale allows faculty to evaluate student performance with greater precision and simplifies other academic activities such as academic recognition and awards. For graduate programs, the grading policy has remained unchanged since its creation. This policy reflects discretionary passing grades of 8, 9 or 10, and of 5 for failed courses.

### **CFR 2.11**

**The institution develops and implements co-curricular programs that are integrated with its academic goals and programs.**

The Mission of CETYS University establishes as its purpose to: "form individuals with the necessary moral and intellectual capacities to participate in an important manner in

the economic, social and cultural improvement of the country” while the institution’s educational model encourages the support of the values of liberty, justice, spirituality, beauty, goodness and truth. Also, the implementation of the educational process includes learning to learn, learning abilities and skills, learning to coexist and learning to be. Finally, the University encourages core values of an entrepreneurial attitude, social and professional engagement, continued improvement, and internationalization.

Therefore, consistent with these purposes, all academic programs include co-curricular activities such as orientation, mid-term and completion workshops, forums and conventions/symposiums, conferences on specific issues addressed by undergraduate and graduate programs, entrepreneurial activities, professional internships, social service, cultural activities, specially Inter-CETYS Cultural, sporting activities, study trips or attendance at foreign conventions undergraduate and graduate book presentations; activities sponsored by Student Life, “Yes to Life Program”, Academic and Personal Student Development (DAPA), Center for Learning and Scholarship (CEA), General Well-being Center, Student Associations, academic exchange programs, academic visits abroad, sporting activities, etc. All of these activities seek to encourage both undergraduate and graduate students’ professional and personal growth and development.

#### **CFR 2.12**

**The institution ensures that all students understand the requirements of their academic programs.**

To ensure that all students understand the requirements of their academic programs, CETYS University offers timely, useful and ongoing information about relevant requirements through its Website, orientation workshops, information sessions for undergraduate and graduate students, various handbooks, academic calendar, course schedules, program advisors and coordinators, documentation on educational support and development during registration or in the course of studies through the academic program director.

#### **CFR 2.13**

**Student support services are designed to meet the needs of the specific types of students the institution serves and the curricula it offers.**

The following student support services are available on our University’s three campuses:

- a) Financial aid: offering funding in the form of educational loans, grants and various types of scholarships.
- b) Registration: through the Registrar’s Office and online registration for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- c) Counseling: provided by the professor in a personalized manner through advising and by directing the students to academic support areas or psychological guidance, as appropriate.

- d) Academic and Program of study coordinators: providing students academic guidance regarding their academic program and following-up on retention, graduation, internship, social service and awarding of academic degree issues.
- e) Library and Information Services: Library collections, multimedia resources and necessary reading and study areas. Additionally, guided visits and library orientation workshops are offered, along with on-line catalogs, alumni services, inter- library loans, agreements, etc.
- f) Computer Services: provided by Information Services who manages computer resources in both software and hardware, as well as the necessary multimedia resources for course instruction, Blackboard, secure Internet access, local network connections, databases, email and video conference services.
- g) General computer laboratories: providing computer resources for general hardware and software use.
- h) Specialized laboratories: providing specialized resources specific to each academic program. Resources employed in general and specialized laboratories are consistent with course programs, assessed during their respective reviews, and meet the requirements established by accrediting agencies.
- i) Artistic and cultural exhibition areas: such as auditoriums, classrooms and areas for art displays, musical and other performances.
- j) Sporting Areas: fields, stadiums and other venues for athletic activities and sporting events.

#### **CFR 2.14** **Transfer students**

The transfer of credits is not commonly practiced among educational institutions (such as universities or technological institutes, the Mexican equivalent of U.S. community colleges) in Mexico. Instead, what occurs most often between institutions are Equivalency and Validation procedures, which are subject to official guidelines and academic policies applied by the given institution of higher education.

Credit Equivalency and Validation procedures for students from other universities who are interested in pursuing their studies at CETYS University are defined in the *Student Handbook* (Chapter three). The procedure is initiated internally with the support of the respective Academic Director or Dean of the pertinent School, and it is ultimately the Secretariat for Education and Social Welfare (SEBS) who determines validation of the equivalency. A list of requisites and official guidelines is available at the Registrar's Office. The rules and regulations applied are of an institutional nature, free from bias

and/or discrimination and always aligned with our mission and supported by the Statute, Chapter VI, specifically Art. 112.

Once the student is enrolled, following an equivalency or validation, the Academic or Major Coordinator and Academic Advising follow-up on the student to provide him/her with the necessary academic services and support that is provided to every student registered at CETYS University.

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## **Conclusion**

CETYS's educational model is one that vehemently responds to the purpose of its Mission and therefore, we seek its daily execution by all faculty members for the benefit of our students, thus ensuring that they may fully attain the learning outcomes established in each academic degree program. The institution emphasizes faculty development at all levels, undergraduate and graduate, but it also incorporates high-level, well prepared professors, experts in their fields, who nuance and enrich the learning experiences offered to the students by the University. All faculty members, irrespective of their employment status, are subject to regular evaluation, providing them with feedback on areas that may need improvement and confirming successful teaching practices.

We are confident that our educational model is of substantial quality since our close relationship with the community and the professional environment provides us with evidence that our alumni perform positively, thus allowing us to appreciate that learning outcomes are being achieved. Still, we are aware that there is much room for improvement, and in a significant manner, the institution is making efforts to demonstrate and improve the quality of education it offers. This issue will be addressed in greater detail in our *Educational Effectiveness Report*, identifying areas for improvement that we have found and on which we have already started to work, principally in the educational effectiveness inventory and the imminent development of research activities.

CETYS University is an institution with a global vision which does not hold back on efforts to develop its internationalization, and one of these efforts is precisely our quest for WASC accreditation.

The above reveals that CETYS University has defined both its purposes and its objectives, and the evidence presented demonstrates the achievement of these two.

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## **Recommendations:**

We have fully embraced the WASC accreditation process as a qualitative approach and as guidance for improvement. Motivated by the deep self-analysis that the institution undertook and completed as part of the institutional capacity stage, we have decided to focus additional efforts and resources in the following areas, along the following specific recommendations:

- To promote and enact Curricular Reform (review and revision) and Standardization at the graduate level, similar to what was performed at the undergraduate level starting in 2004, but keeping in mind the differences, expectations, and needs at each level (CFR 2.4).
- Academic data concerning institutional educational objectives needs to be made uniform and systematic (2.5)
- Our Educational Model encourages faculty to utilize Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs), and even though these tools are employed, we must strengthen their use – with greater frequency and in a systematic manner – among all faculty, specifically among course faculty (CFR 2.6).
- We must review, update and strengthen the Graduate Evaluation/Assessment System (CFR 2.7).
- Institutional research is undergoing a strengthening phase, whose direction is guided by the Institutional Master Research Plan. Academic Programs develop the skills that the student must possess for conducting research, and through the Institutional Research Program student and faculty research projects are developed. This Plan is in-process and the institution faces a challenge in its implementation in a systematic way and on a system-wide level (CFR 2.8).
- Although we have an organizational chart with definition of functions and responsibilities for academic support services, nonetheless, we must evaluate and standardize the structure of academic support services on the three campuses, while respecting the differences and needs of each one (CFR 2.13).
- The Graduate College will need to fully implement its *2015 Plan* that calls for creating new programs, developing the faculty, increasing enrollment, and enhancing the infrastructure.